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# Saipan Tribune

THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER

Volume XXII, Issue No. 290

THURSDAY DECEMBER 13, 2012

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## OPINION METER

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Gazans are rebuilding the network of underground smuggling tunnels.

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Female homicide victim ID'd; no positive ID for male victim. **PAGE 2**  
House speaker says he might run for mayor in 2014. **PAGE 5**

## 'Extraditing Buckingham overdue'

By HAIDEE V. EUGENIO  
haidee\_eugenio@saipantribune.com  
REPORTER

Attorney General Joey Patrick San Nicolas said yesterday he agrees with Delegate Gregorio Kilili Sablan (Ind-MP) that extraditing former AG Edward T. Buckingham to the CNMI "would help restore and trust confidence in the Office of the Attorney General," even as lawmakers formally urged San Nicolas yesterday to "seek the assistance of the U.S. Department of Justice to extradite Buckingham."

» **Inos says cost a 'factor' in extradition**  
» **Growing clamor to have ex-AG brought back**

Lawmakers pointed out that Buckingham "continues to be a fugitive from justice," after the CNMI Supreme Court denied the former AG's petition to overturn the trial court's order declaring him a fugitive from justice.

Acting governor Eloy S. Inos, meanwhile, said yesterday the decision to extradite Buckingham rests with the attorney general, in consultation with the governor. He said the administration is also looking at the cost factor in the extradition process.

But San Nicolas said he is "not at liberty to state with specificity what I will do at this time."

"But let me say this. I agree with Congressman Sablan that extraditing former AG Buckingham to the Commonwealth would help restore trust and confidence in the

**See BUCKINGHAM on Page 4**



Rear Adm. Newton E. Kendig, foreground left, medical director and assistant director of the Health Services Division at the Bureau of Prisons, addresses acting governor Eloy S. Inos, foreground right, and others during a briefing on Capital Hill yesterday morning on a memorandum of understanding between the CNMI and U.S. agencies. The unprecedented MOU paves the way for a team of medical staff from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to start providing critically needed medical personnel to the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. for 90 days starting yesterday.

HAIDEE V. EUGENIO

## Feds send in medical staff to CHC for 90 days

By HAIDEE V. EUGENIO  
haidee\_eugenio@saipantribune.com  
REPORTER

Acting governor Eloy S. Inos announced yesterday the signing of a memorandum of understanding between the CNMI and U.S. agencies,

paving the way for a team of medical staff from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to start providing critically needed medical personnel to the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. for 90 days starting yesterday.

» **MOU signed between CNMI, US agencies**

This is an unprecedented joint effort among federal agencies to help meet the CNMI's immediate health care needs. Inos, during a briefing on Capital Hill yesterday morning, said this is one of the best things the

yesterday.

See **FEDS** on **Page 4**



## 12/12/12 spawns weddings on Saipan

Four newlywed couples kiss as Mayor Donald G. Flores looks on after the wedding ceremony at the Mayor's Office along Beach Road at noon during yesterday's auspicious date, 12/12/12.

By CLARISSA V. DAVID  
clarissa\_david@saipantribune.com  
REPORTER

Because it happens only once a century, yesterday's 12/12/12 date caused wedding bells to ring on island and the rest of the world for couples hoping to add cosmic relevance to their special day.

On Saipan, where several island and church lead-

**See WEDDINGS on Page 4**



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# Local

## DPS identifies female homicide victim; no positive ID for male victim

By CLARISSA V. DAVID  
clarissa\_david@saipantribune.com  
REPORTER

Authorities have identified the female victim in last week's double homicide in San Vicente that orphaned a young boy.

Jin Liu, also known as Emma, was one of two individuals whose dead bodies were found by officers of the Department of Public Safety in a state of decomposition Saturday afternoon.

The 40-year old Chinese national was identified because of the documentations that were available, DPS public information officer Jason Tarkong said

in a phone interview yesterday.

Besides the woman's identification, police also released the victim's photo in an effort to obtain from the public any information that would help the ongoing investigation to solve the case, Tarkong told *Saipan Tribune*.

He noted that DPS, through its homicide investigation unit, is still in the process of trying to communicate with Liu's family, who hails from northern China.

Tarkong, however, said they have yet to "positively identify" the other victim, a male, owing to the state of the body when he was found by police.

Tarkong said they will identify



Liu

the male victim, believed to be Liu's husband Jang, once positive identification becomes available.

The brutal killing of the couple was discovered after their 6-year-old son was not picked up on Dec. 6, Thursday, at Mount Carmel School where he is enrolled as a first grader.

School staff took the young boy into custody and attempted to locate the parents at their San Vicente residence.

The child was then taken into custody Thursday evening by the Division of Youth Services, which also made an effort to locate the parents until the next day, to no avail, prompting police officers to go to the child's house where the lifeless bodies were found.

Authorities believe that the crime occurred between Thursday morning and late Thursday afternoon, and that the victims' car, a white 2010 Honda CRV was taken by suspect/s and parked at Micro Beach.

DPS and NMI Crime Stoppers are asking help from the public by calling the Crime Stoppers hotline at 234-7272 if anyone wants to give tips but would like to remain anonymous.

Web tips may also be sent via its website, [www.nmicrimestoppers.net](http://www.nmicrimestoppers.net). The Crime Stoppers Program pays up to \$1,000 for any information leading to an arrest.

Wei Duong Guo, a Chinese businessman who was rumored to be one of the victims, on Monday extended his condolences to the victims' families and offered an additional \$1,000 to help authorities solve the crime.

## Plaintiffs in federalization lawsuit seek voluntary dismissal of case

By MONETH G. DEPOSA  
moneth\_deposa@saipantribune.com  
REPORTER

The plaintiffs in the federalization case filed in the U.S. District Court have asked for the voluntary dismissal of the case and requested the court to modify or vacate its early order to reflect their action.

On Nov. 16, U.S. District Court for the NMI Chief Justice Ramona V. Manglona dismissed with prejudice the first amendment complaint that challenged the implementation of the federalization law, or the Consolidated Natural Resources Act of 2008 after the plaintiffs failed to oppose a motion to dismiss filed by the counsel of defendant Janet Napolitano.

Soon after the order was issued, the plaintiffs' counsel, Stephen Woodruff, said that he will file a motion to correct, clarify, or reconsider the order, saying he was misled by Napolitano's lawyer on the date the plaintiff is supposed to turn in a response. Woodruff earlier said that he was made to believe that the submission of response was Nov. 29, 2012 and not Nov. 8. This was later denied by the defendant's counsel.

Woodruff, in two separate filings on Tuesday, gave notice to the court about his clients' voluntary dismissal of their claims in the case while reserving their right to seek remedies at any other time in any appropriate forum, including the federal court.

Woodruff is representing some 30 individuals who mostly leaders of nonresident groups in the CNMI. Theodore W. Atkinson, senior litigation counsel for the U.S. Department of Justice, represented Napolitano and others in the same case.

According to Woodruff, Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 41(a) authorizes any plaintiff to voluntarily dismiss an action at any time before an opposing party serves either an answer or a motion for summary judgment.

"Defendants effectively have acknowledged that the court's Nov. 16, 2012 order dismissing amended complaint with prejudice was entered improvidently and that reopening of the matter is necessary and appropriate,"

the court document stated.

For Woodruff, "dismissal with prejudice of the unarticulated claims is a logical impossibility" and runs contrary to the clearly established preference of American courts for adjudication on the merits.

In an interview yesterday, Woodruff said that despite the decision of his clients, they are not giving up the cause.

"The bottom line is that plaintiffs have concluded that there is no point in attempting to proceed further with this particular lawsuit. We do not believe it is the best vehicle at this time to seek remedies for the serious deficiencies in DHS' (Department of Homeland Security) implementation of federal immigration in the CNMI. We are not, however, by any means, giving up the cause," he told *Saipan Tribune*.

Since the Sept. 28, 2012 deadline for the amended complaint, President Obama has been re-elected and Republicans in Congress are forced to reassess their position on comprehensive immigration control. Woodruff believes this substantially changes the environment in which plaintiffs seek remedies for the flawed implementation of the federal immigration law in the CNMI.

"Consequently, plaintiffs are engaged in a strategic reassessment of their quest for justice, improved status, and better governance," he added.

The federalization case was filed in 2011 by plaintiffs because of the mess created by DHS by putting CW regulations into effect only months before the end of the initial two-year period of "grandfathered" status for aliens present in the CNMI before the transition program's effective date.

After the court refused to grant a preliminary injunction, plaintiffs and counsel thought it a good idea to expand the suit to attack the overall implementation of the CNRA.

That "proved too ambitious and invited error, which unfortunately was exploited by defendants' counsel to obtain Judge Manglona's Nov. 16, 2012 order," Woodruff said.

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# Housing allowance scrapped in CHC employees' new contracts

By **MONETH G. DEPOSA**  
moneth\_deposa@saipantribune.com  
REPORTER

The Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. has formally scrapped the housing allowance of hospital employees who are hired from outside the CNMI, according to COO and chief financial officer Esther Muña.

However, many affected personnel will see an adjustment in

their salaries and wages upon signing a new contract to incorporate a portion of the lost housing perk, Muña said.

The monthly housing allowance—\$600 for single employees and \$800 for those with families—used to form part of the compensation package for off-island recruits to entice them to come to the CNMI. This benefit has been delayed, however,

in the last few months due to the scarce resources of the hospital. The corporation eventually moved to scrap this benefit to minimize personnel cost.

Muña revealed that under the new contracts signed in November, a salary adjustment may be provided, based on the employee's experience and performance. Any merit increase in the new contracts will now be "negotiated" with the corporation, according to her.

"For now, it's negotiated," she told *Saipan Tribune*, adding that it's hard for the corporation to implement an across-the-board adjustment because it will increase cost.

Muña concedes that removing the housing allowance is not really a savings for the corpora-

tion because it will continue to pay for its share once salaries are adjusted.

Muña cannot immediately say the maximum and minimum "adjustments" that have been approved for personnel since November but she assured that all will be based on experience.

The COO said the "adjustment" is not only for off-island recruits but also for employees hired locally.

Meantime, Muña said the corporation paid out last week employees' housing check for May. To date, the unpaid obligation for housing perk is from June to October this year.

"We paid them [for May] this week...and we're trying our best to catch up," she said.

Muña said the corporation

is committed to paying the amount still owed once funding is identified for the purpose.

The housing allowance of employees is issued during first week of each month through

separate check.

The hospital used to spend about \$1.2 million a year for the housing perks of over 200 personnel, mostly nurses hired from the Philippines.

## Saipan Zoo gets a helping hand from SSHS cadets

By **CLARISSA V. DAVID**  
clarissa\_david@saipantribune.com  
REPORTER

Thirty-one cadets from the Charlie and Delta companies of the Saipan Southern High School Manta Ray Battalion took part in a service learning project at the Saipan Zoo yesterday.

The five-hour activity, which began at 8:30am, had students from freshman to senior levels help zoo staff in doing yard maintenance and beautification at Saipan's lone zoo.

The service learning project is a requirement done once every school year by the Manta Ray Battalion, wherein the cadets themselves plan, prepare, and execute the project, according to Command Sgt. Maj. Richard Basa.

Basa, who led yesterday's group, said the service learning project allows the cadets to give back to their community and learn at the same time.

Saipan Zoo serves as one of the regular venues of the battalion's service learning project, according to Basa, adding that the zoo also was highly suggested by last year's group of cadets because of the range of learning they received from the experience.

Besides gaining knowledge about zoo animals and their upkeep, the students also learned

from the staff of the Division of Fish & Wildlife, who conducted presentations about brown tree snakes and Mariana fruit bats.

Basa said that DFW stressed the importance of reporting sightings of brown tree snakes. The cadets also learned about the need to protect Mariana fruit bats because of its declining population.

Kateleen Tenorio said this is her first service learning project under the Charlie Company. She said she found out more about animals, how they interact with people, as well as new information about the environment.

"I liked it. I would recommend other students to experience this kind of service learning project which lets us do something for the community while learning," said 16-year-old Tenorio.

Basa expressed optimism that the students will share what they learned from yesterday's service learning project.

"It's all about the cadets," he told *Saipan Tribune*. "We give them the resources and hopefully, they'll learn and bring it back to the school and the community."

Basa thanked Saipan Zoo owner Frank Aldan for hosting the students' service learning project in his facility, which is always in need of a helping hand.

## Russian tourist rescued in Guam

**RITIDIAN POINT, Guam**—A 30-year old, Russian tourist was rescued after being pulled over the reef at Ritidian Point by a rip current yesterday afternoon.

The swimmer's girlfriend, who was watching from shore, rushed to the Conservation Office on Ritidian Point for help as the swimmer went over the reef and out into the open ocean.

The National Park Service, Guam Fire Rescue, Andersen Fire Rescue, and U.S. Navy Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron 25, in coordination with a U.S. Coast Guard Response Boat-Medium from Station Apra Harbor responded to the distress call.

HSC-25 quickly spotted the distressed swimmer and relayed his location to the U.S. Coast Guard Joint Rescue Sub Center. Search and Rescue watchstanders were able to direct fire rescue crews to the

area who rescued the swimmer by jet ski. No injuries were reported at this time.

Rescue crews interviewed the swimmer who indicated once he was swept outside the reef line there was not a safe way to re-enter the beach area. Instead of trying to fight the current to return to shore, the swimmer remained calm and continued to tread water waiting for help.

"Getting caught in a rip current can get dangerous quickly, if you don't know what to do," stated Lt. Gregg Maye, command center chief for Sector Guam. "When caught in a rip it is crucial to go with the current and conserve energy until you are able to swim parallel to the beach as the current dissipates."

For more survival tips and information about how to identify and avoid rip currents, visit <http://www.ripcurrents.noaa.gov/overview.shtml>. (PR)

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## FEDS

From Page 1

CNMI could hope for.

CHC chief executive officer Juan N. Babauta and the visiting medical staff led by Rear Adm. Newton E. Kendig, medical director and assistant director of the Health Services Division at the Bureau of Prisons, led the briefing that was also attended by federal labor ombudswoman Pamela Brown. Another briefing was held at CHC yesterday afternoon.

The MOU was signed between the CNMI and the U.S. Department of the Interior, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, and Office of the Surgeon General "to provide critically needed medical personnel to improve health care services in the community."

Under the MOU, the U.S. will be providing a deputy chief executive officer, clinical laboratories director, clinical laboratories manager, nurse manager, pharmacist, physicians, and nurses. On island now are at least six of these personnel.

These personnel will be working with CHC's Babauta to review current operations and make recommendations for improvement of clinical and administrative services.

The program will be in place for a 90-day period and the costs will be shared by Interior, DHHS, and the CNMI.

Inos later told reporters that Interior provided a grant of at least \$500,000.

Kendig, in an interview with reporters, said there will be a total of 10 to 11 medical personnel that will be assisting the CNMI, including four to five that will be arriving later.

"My chain of command is with the

Surgeon General's Office in Washington, and we're being deployed here as officers to work with the governor's office and the healthcare corporation. We were deployed here to provide technical assistance. We are here on the spirit of teamwork and collaboration to see what we can do to help Saipan," he said.

Kendig said the areas they are covering include the areas identified in the CMS report and audit.

Jim Stump, the governor's legal counsel, and Inos said during the briefing that one of the major objectives is to figure out a long-term sustainable model for CHC. They noted the importance of regular briefings and coordination.

"We are trying to provide U.S. quality medical care with very limited resources; that is a tremendous challenge," Stump said. He added

that what the CNMI government is seeking is input from the visiting medical team on how CHC can provide U.S. standards of care in a cost-effective manner.

Inos said the administration would like to point out that had the government not turned the hospital into a corporation, the problems wouldn't have been discovered and addressed as they are now.

Kendig said the team would like to make sure that during the 90-day period, they would be able to measure how things are moving along.

Besides Kendig, the commissioned corps mission to the CNMI includes Capt. Lisa Hogan, nurse manager; Dr. Sylvie Cohen, safety officer/physician; Cdr. Kathleen Dotson, pharmacy manager; Cdr. Daniel H. Hesselgesser, clin-

ical laboratory manager; and Lt. Lane Vause, medical technologist.

Gov. Benigno R. Fitial, in a statement, said this endeavor is part of the CNMI's effort to make immediate improvements in medical care to address identified safety issues, and then to begin a restructuring of CNMI medical services to develop what is called a "long-term sustainable healthcare model."

"This is not going to be easy, but I have faith that it can be accomplished if we work together on this critical issue," said Fitial, who is currently in the Philippines.

Babauta and Inos gave the medical team an overview of the government hospital's transition into a corporation. The hospital is currently under a state of emergency.

## HHS team visits Saipan hospital



Hospital director Karen Buettner shows the visiting team from U.S. Department of Health and Human Services the facility's Children's Clinic during their tour yesterday.

MONETH G. DEPOSA

By MONETH G. DEPOSA  
moneth\_deposa@saipantribune.com  
REPORTER

A six-member team from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services arrived on island yesterday to provide assistance and much-needed expertise to the public hospital, which is still addressing deficiencies identified by the U.S. Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services.

Corporation CEO Juan N. Babauta, along with hospital key personnel, welcomed the visiting group whose first agenda for the day was a courtesy visit to the governor's office where they met Lt. Gov. Eloy Inos for an hourlong conversation.

The visiting team—composed of an internist, laboratory specialists, phar-

macist, and licensed nurse practitioner, among others—disclosed during their meeting with local health officials yesterday that "HHS' big priority for now is to see what assets it can bring to CHC."

The team, led by chief executive officer Newton Kendig, is the first group of specialists sent by HHS. HHS, in collaboration with the Office of Insular Affairs, has committed to sending a 10-member team.

Babauta said the team may stay three months or longer, depending on CHC's needs. He said HHS is planning to send four more members to the hospital.

Of the six members, two will serve as CHC's laboratory director and lab manager—two hard-to-fill positions that were identified as critical in main-

taining CHC's condition of participation with CMS.

The visiting group assured Babauta, hospital director Karen Buettner, and other officials that "HHS is making sure that CHC will get 10 best officers" to provide needed expertise.

Babauta described the HHS' team as "invaluable resources" that can greatly help the hospital. "We look forward in working alongside with this team and learn from them. This is a great benefit for our hospital," he said.

### Children's clinic

Babauta gave the visiting team a tour of key units at the hospital yesterday, starting with the children's clinic.

In their talk with clinic staff, the group was told about the heavy traffic of patients in the children's clinic, which averaged 60 patients per day in November. CHC has four pediatricians and the clinic opens from 7:30am to 4:30pm each day.

The group also visited the family care clinic, laboratory unit, hemodialysis section, and other departments. Health officials who joined the tour included Emergency Preparedness director Warren Villagomez, Public Health Division director Roxanne Diaz, and acting CFO Cora Ada.

## WEDDINGS

From Page 1

ers are sanctioned to officiate wedding ceremonies, four couples headed to the Mayor's Office yesterday to exchange vows in front of Mayor Donald G. Flores.

The four pairs of newlyweds that tied the knot in a mass wedding at noon—the 12<sup>th</sup> hour of the 12<sup>th</sup> day of the 12<sup>th</sup> month in year 2012—were Pepito G. Isip and Rosario S. Macapagal; Martin C. Castro, Jr. and Mayumi Ikeda; Seven Joseph U. Tan and Karen Gay E. Rivera; and Shyam K. Raut and Kimberly Ann Magofina.

Another couple, Franz Reksid and Piding Sanchez, was supposed to join the mass wedding but later chose to be in a separate ceremony before noon.

*Saipan Tribune* learned that besides the wedding ceremony at the Mayor's Office, several couples also got married in several locations throughout the island yesterday.

In an interview before the wedding, Flores said that even last year, he remembers two couples being married on 11/11/11.

According to Flores, some of the couples requested to have the ceremony held at noon. He obliged even though he has never scheduled a noon wedding since becoming mayor.

"It happens only once in a lifetime. Next year, there won't be any date like this. That in itself is unique," he said.

Tina Concepcion, who handles wedding applications at the Mayor's Office, said that special dates are popular, and some of the couples who got married yesterday requested the 12/12/12 date as early as November.

Usually, she said, they have three to five couples who get married every week, depending on the mayor's schedule. "There could have been more," said Concepcion.

Couples who want to get married pay a \$50 application fee at the Superior Court and another \$20 filing or processing fee to be paid at the Mayor's Office. Once forms are filled out and fees are paid, the couple can request for a certain date when they want to get married, which would have to be checked against the mayor's availability.

But no matter what date couples choose to get married, Flores reminded them to take their vows to each other seriously.

"They should stick together and take care of each other for the rest of their lives," added the mayor.

Mayor Ramon M. Dela Cruz of Tinian said in a brief phone interview that he did not officiate any wedding rite yesterday. Mayor Melchor Mendiola of Rota, on the other hand, did not return phone calls as of press time yesterday.

## BUCKINGHAM

From Page 1

Office of the Attorney General. At my Senate confirmation hearing I pledged to help restore trust in the office," San Nicolas said in response to media inquiries.

Rep. Frank Dela Cruz (IR-Saipan) said it's about time the CNMI bring back the former AG.

"It's long overdue," he told *Saipan Tribune*.

Senate floor leader Pete Reyes (IR-Saipan), House minority leader Joe Deleon Guerrero (IR-Saipan), and Rep. Ray Tebuteb (IR-Saipan) wrote a one-page letter to San Nicolas yesterday, asking him to initiate the extradition process.

"We urge you to initiate the required extradition process to bring Buckingham back to the CNMI to answer the charges filed against him in the CNMI Superior Court. Buckingham, like all criminal defendants, must be brought to justice," the three lawmakers said.

Reyes, Deleon Guerrero, and Tebuteb said if Buckingham is allowed to evade the CNMI Superior Court, "this will set a precedent for all defendants that the CNMI Office of Attorney

General is lenient and will not pursue defendants that flee the CNMI when they are summoned to appear in court."

"We feel that cost is insignificant when it comes to the need for justice. The CNMI must let all defendants know that they must adhere to summons and orders to appear in court," they told San Nicolas.

Sablan's Dec. 5 letter to San Nicolas spawned another round of calls to extradite Buckingham, who left the CNMI on Aug. 4, a day after OPA filed criminal charges against him and a day after he, along with Gov. Benigno R. Fitial, signed a no-bid, \$190.8-million diesel power purchase agreement.

The delegate said the U.S. Department of Justice would be willing to pursue Buckingham but the CNMI has to initiate the process to extradite him. He said a request from San Nicolas to U.S. Attorney Alicia Limtiaco "would be necessary...to initiate Mr. Buckingham's capture."

San Nicolas said yesterday he will respond to Sablan's letter.

Dela Cruz said Buckingham "has been gone for months now."

"We have a fugitive. What do we do? Do we just sit back? What happens if there's another fugitive? We should

bring him back to face the charges. The governor and then acting AG Viola Alepuyo won't lift a finger because the governor is friends with Buckingham and Alepuyo. Now all eyes are on San Nicolas. I hope he heeds the call to initiate the extradition process, and live up to his words to uphold the law. I believe it's just a matter of time for us to see what he's made of," Dela Cruz added.

Buckingham is facing criminal charges in connection with his alleged hosting of a political campaign in 2010 for the governor's delegate candidate, obstruction of justice in August 2012 when he allegedly used police and ports police officers to shield him from being served a penal summons, approval of a sole-source ARRA management contract, and approval of a no-bid, \$190.8-million diesel power purchase agreement, among other things.

These were among the issues included in the House minority bloc's defeated resolution to impeach Gov. Benigno R. Fitial for 16 allegations of corruption, felony, and neglect of duty. The impeachment resolution will be reintroduced in January.

Rep. Stanley Torres (Ind-Saipan), meanwhile, said the decision to extradite Buckingham or not rests

with the AG.

"Let the AG decide on this. Let him do his job. It's interference if somebody else tells him what to do. It's his discretion," said Torres, one of those who voted "no" to the impeachment resolution.

The Legislature may appropriate funds, but Dela Cruz said this being a lame duck Legislature, the easier way to fund the extradition would be through the governor's reprogramming of funds.

Dela Cruz also reiterated that a resolution he pre-filed in September is languishing in the House clerk's office because Speaker Eli Cabrera (R-Saipan) has yet to call a session. That resolution asks the governor and then acting AG Viola Alepuyo to initiate proceedings for Buckingham's extradition. Dela Cruz will amend the resolution to change the AG's name.

Cabrera said separately that he will call a session next week, adding that it would be up to the members to decide on Dela Cruz's extradition resolution.

Sablan said he has been in communication with U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder and U.S. Attorney Alicia Limtiaco concerning the Buckingham case, and said he was informed that the

U.S. Department of Justice would be willing to pursue Buckingham but a request from San Nicolas as AG "would be necessary...to initiate Mr. Buckingham's capture."

The acting governor, in an interview with reporters yesterday morning, said extraditing the former AG "is not going to be easy," but said the "legal structure is there."

While he acknowledges that restoring public trust and confidence in the OAG and the administration, he said he "just want[s] to make sure the few thousands [of dollars] are there too."

When asked about his individual position on the matter, Inos said he reserves comment on it.

But he cited the Supreme Court's recent decision, which essentially means Buckingham remains a fugitive.

"He has to face the charges, he has to come back here," he added. "Cost would be a major concern at this point. We just don't know how much it's going to cost. It's going to be several thousands of dollars."

Inos also said the expectation is for the federal government to bill the CNMI for the extradition costs.

He said he has yet to talk to the governor, who is expected to be back soon.



# House speaker says he might run for mayor in 2014

By **HAIDEE V. EUGENIO**  
haidee\_eugenio@saipantribune.com  
REPORTER

House Speaker Eli Cabrera (R-Saipan) told reporters Tuesday he might run for Saipan mayor in 2014 under the governor's

Republican Party, and at the top of his priority list is working with individual communities to help deter crimes and clean their surroundings.

"I am coming back," he said, weeks after he lost his re-election bid for Precinct 1 during the Nov. 6 midterm elections.

At the same time, Cabrera said the so-called "fat" tax bill may be substituted to take into consideration comments from the Women, Infants and Children's Program and the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp.

In his view, food products shouldn't be taxed more. Cabrera said he wants those items such as peanut butter that are in the WIC program food list to be removed from the "fat" tax bill's list.

But the outgoing speaker said he does not have a problem taxing more such items as alcohol, cigarettes, perfumes, and construction materials, among other things. He said a session may be called for next week to act on this bill. At least two more sessions in the lame duck Legislature are expected between now and Jan. 11, the second one being the *sine die*. The new Legislature will be sworn in on Jan. 14.

House Bill 17-320 or the Health Care Impact Tax Act levies a new "fat" tax of 5 percent on at least 30 consumer goods, including betel nuts, candies, chocolates, ice cream and edible ice, chewing tobacco, cigarettes, malt beer, wine, soft drinks, cooking oil, and peanut butter and paste.

The goal is to help CHC pay off a \$4.58 million debt to the

Marianas Public Land Trust, and "combat the growing problem of obesity" in the CNMI. Vice speaker Felicidad Ogumoro (R-Saipan) is the bill's author.

Cabrera also said depend-

ing on Rep. Edmund Villagomez's (Cov-Saipan) decision, the House may move to override the governor's veto of a bill strengthening laws on sex crimes.

## Cedrick the Magician charms audiences with his first show

By **CLARISSA V. DAVID**  
clarissa\_david@saipantribune.com  
REPORTER

Cedrick the Magician charmed his audience with his talent during his first public show Saturday afternoon at the American Memorial Park auditorium.

Called Santa-via-Skype, the show was a certified hit, with the audience both young and old giving rave reviews for the young and talented conjurer from Tinian.

Santa-via-Skype also celebrated the arrival of the most iconic symbol for Christmas, using Skype to track Santa's progress as he traveled from the North Pole to Saipan. In between calls to Santa, Cedrick the Magician delighted the crowd with his magic tricks, some of which he learned at an early age.

The 20-year-old Cedrick demonstrated, among others, the very first trick he learned, using three ropes in different sizes; a dollar bill from a member of the audience, which was mysteriously moved from a glass at one end of the room to the other; and even making Santa's sleigh work.

Santa-via-Skype culminated

with Santa Claus himself arriving for picture taking with the youngsters and young-at-hearts.

Cedrick the Magician said the idea for the Santa-via-Skype show came from an entire team that also put together last Saturday's event.

Although nervous at the start of the 45-minute show, Cedrick the Magician was able to overcome his jitters after seeing the audiences' reaction. "Everyone just turned out. It's a full house, as expected. Thank you Jesus!" he exclaimed.

Cedrick noted that the support of his family, who flew all the way from Tinian, also gave him confidence to perform publicly for the first time.

Conrado Libut, Cedrick's father, was seen taking photos and video of his son during and after the show.

"He was very confident. I'm happy about the show's turnout and I'm very proud of my son," Libut said of his fourth child out of a brood of seven.

Cedrick's mother, Joji, said it was her first time to watch Cedrick in a show. A teacher at Grace Christian Academy on Tinian, Joji said she and the entire family were supportive

when Cedrick decided to leave his initial plan of becoming a civil engineer.

"It's his dream to become a magician, so we're just behind him, ready to support in any way we can," she told *Saipan Tribune*.

Ballen Song, Cedrick's best friend who joined him on stage for one of the tricks, was equally proud. "I just hope he keeps doing what he's doing so he can improve it and become successful," added Song, 17.

Cedrick the Magician also performed at the Brilliant Star School Bazaar last Dec. 9 and will next be seen at Pacific Islands Club this weekend.

Cedrick, who gave away "Classic Mysteries of the Master Magicians" during his show, said his future shows will feature more tricks. He hopes to master "closeup" tricks one day.

"I want to thank the community for coming out. I look forward to seeing them again in my next show. It's going to be great and fun," he said.

For more information, visit <http://cedrickmagic.com/> or contact 789-9197 or [contact@cedrickmagic.com](mailto:contact@cedrickmagic.com).



Cabrera



### D&Q DONATION

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Hoping to help out over the holiday period, D&Q Saipan donated of a pallet of grocery items to Karidat on Dec. 11. Pictured with the donated goods are Max Kretzers from D&Q, with Julie Temaungil, Angie De Leon Guerrero and Calvani Deleon Guerrero of Karidat.



CLARISSA V. DAVID

Cedrick the Magician makes it snow during his first public show called Santa-via-Skype at the American Memorial Park auditorium on Saturday.

## Dance academy to host Christmas Concert

Glushko's Academy of Performing Arts is inviting the public to its fundraising Christmas Concert on Dec. 16, Sunday, at the Charley's Cabaret of the Pacific Islands Club Saipan.

"We promise that this fundraiser will be the cutest Christmas dance program you'll ever see on Saipan. The dances and music are from your most favorite Christmas carols! This event

is a perfect get-together with your family and friends to share the holiday spirit," said academy founder Anna Glushko.

Children will also have a unique opportunity to meet Santa Claus after the show.

The performers will be the students from Glushko's Academy.

The show will start at 6:30pm and last until 8pm. Doors will

open at 6pm.

Tickets are only \$10 for adults and \$5 for children ages 3 to 12. Tickets are available at the door.

Glushko said this is a fundraising event to raise money to be able to produce the March 2013 International Ballet of the Stars.

For additional information, email [glushkosacademy@yahoo.com](mailto:glushkosacademy@yahoo.com) or call 483-6271. (PR)

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# Fitial's objection to show cause hearing denied

By HAIDEE V. EUGENIO  
haidee\_eugenio@saipantribune.com  
REPORTER

Gov. Benigno R. Fitial's objection to a Dec. 28 hearing for order to show cause in connection with a no-bid, \$190.8-million

diesel power purchase agreement has been denied, but Superior Court Associate Judge David A. Wiseman moved the original hearing date to Dec. 31, Monday, at 2pm in Courtroom 223A to accommodate a change

in the court's schedule.

Wiseman gave yesterday Fitial, Saipan Development LLC and other defendants up to Dec. 17 to file any opposition, and up to Dec. 26 for plaintiffs to file a response.

Rep. Janet Maratita (IR-Saipan), Rep. Ray Yumul (IR-Saipan), and the CNMI Senate filed a taxpayers' lawsuit against Fitial, SDLLC, former attorney general Edward T. Buckingham and the Commonwealth Utilities Corp. over the signing of the sole-source PPA.

Maratita, however, found out that Fitial and at least three senators met with SDLLC a few weeks ago to discuss the PPA, which is currently under preliminary injunction.

Maratita, through her lawyer, Ray Quichocho, asked the court to hold in contempt the governor and SDLLC and fine them up to \$10,000 daily for allegedly violating the court orders on the PPA. The court granted Maratita's motion and set a Dec. 28 hearing for order to show cause, but changed the date yesterday to Dec. 31.

Maratita also asked senators to refrain from meeting with SDLLC officials or representatives so as not to jeopardize the case.

Days later, Maratita alleged that Sen. Juan Ayuyu (Ind-Rota) threatened to kill her during a phone conversation with Quichocho. The parties have since mended fences, after Ayuyu denied making the threats. Ayuyu, chairman of the Senate Public Utilities, Transportation and Communications Committee, said he is still opposed to the PPA but wanted to get more information about SDLLC's plan to build a new 50-megawatt diesel power plant and shipyard facility in Lower Base. Ayuyu and other lawmakers said if there's going to be another meeting with SDLLC, they would like it to be held at the Legislature and open to the public.

## CRIME OF THE WEEK

### Double homicide in San Vicente

NMI Crime Stoppers is seeking the community's assistance for information on a homicide incident that occurred at a residence in San Vicente.

On Saturday, Dec. 8, 2012, police discovered the dead bodies of a 50-year-old Chinese male and a 40-year-old Chinese female. The female has been identified as Jin Liu. Police are unable to positively identify the male victim.

The victim's car, a white 2010 Honda CRV, was believed to be taken by the suspect(s) and parked at Micro Beach. Police believed the crime occurred sometime between Thursday morning and late Thursday afternoon. This case is classified as a homicide.

DPS and NMI Crime Stoppers are seeking help from the public. Please contact the NMI Crime Stoppers hotline at 234-7272 should you want to remain anonymous. Chinese speaking and other language interpreters are available. Or, use our website at [www.nmicrimestoppers.net](http://www.nmicrimestoppers.net) NMI Crime Stoppers pays up to \$1,000 for any information leading to an arrest. It pays to call. *(NMI Crime Stoppers)*

MICHAEL A. WHITE, ESQ. F0122  
THE LAW OFFICES OF  
MICHAEL A. WHITE, LLC  
POST OFFICE BOX 5222  
SAIPAN, MARIANA ISLANDS 96950  
TEL: (670) 234-6547  
FAX: (670) 234-9537

ATTORNEYS FOR Plaintiff

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE  
COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN  
MARIANA ISLANDS

NORTHERN  
MARIANAS  
HOUSING  
CORPORATION,  
Plaintiff,

-v-

ANTONIO  
URUMOLOG,  
Defendant.

CIVIL  
ACTION  
NO.  
07-0424

SECOND  
AMENDED  
NOTICE  
OF SALE

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that, pursuant to an Order issued by the Court in this matter on December 22, 2008, I will sell, at public auction, to the highest bidder, on the terms and conditions set forth hereinbelow, all of the right, title, and interest of Defendant in and to the following property: Lot No. 010 K 225, situated in Dandan, Saipan Northern Mariana Islands, containing an area of 920 square meters, more or less, as more particularly described on Drawing/Cadastral Plat No. 010 K 01 dated August 19, 1987, Commonwealth Recorder's File No. 87-2909, the description therein being incorporated herein by reference.

Date, Time, and Place of Sale. The sale will be held on Friday, January 11, 2013, at the hour of 1:30 p.m., at The Law Offices of Michael A. White, LLC, Joeten Center, Susupe, Saipan, Northern Mariana Islands. The sale will be open to the general public.

Terms and Conditions of Sale. The Terms and Conditions of Sale may be obtained from the undersigned, either prior to or at the sale. These terms and conditions shall govern the conduct of the sale.

DATED, this 5th day of December, 2012:

/s/ MICHAEL A. WHITE, Auctioneer



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Invites qualified US workers to apply for the following positions:

#### (1) GUEST RELATIONS MANAGER - CHINA MARKET

Qualifications: Must have at least 4 years of progressive experience in management level and 5 years in the Hospitality Industry. Able to multi-task and must possess exceptional customer service and interpersonal skills. Proficient in both oral and written communication (English and Mandarin Chinese). Planning and problem-solving skills are essential. Must have the ability to manage a department in a changing environment and manage employees' performance.

#### (3) MASSAGE THERAPIST

Qualifications: Must have gone through training in a vocational school or acquired at least 2 years of related on-the-job experience (Shiatsu, Oil and Foot Massage) in a spa environment. Ability to speak Mandarin Chinese is an advantage. Must be able to adapt to changes in work assignments and willing to work on evenings, weekends and holidays.

#### (1) EVENTS MANAGER

Qualifications: Strong background and experience in Food & Beverage/Events preferably in the hospitality industry. Possess the ability to work quickly, accurately, creatively and independently in a fast-paced environment. 5 years work experience required. Must be able to work a variable schedule on occasion, including early morning, evenings and/or weekends.

Application Forms may be obtained from our Security Office located at the South Wing. To be considered, applications must be submitted not later than December 29, 2012. Background checks and pre-employment drug testing will be required prior to employment.

**Fiesta Resort & Spa, Saipan is an Equal Opportunity Employer  
Qualified Women, Minorities, Veterans and Persons  
with Disabilities are urged to apply.**



**Century Insurance Co., Ltd.**

## JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

### GENERAL MANAGER

Bachelors Degree plus 10 years experience in the insurance business, at least 5 years of that as a general or operations manager in an insurance company. Must possess experience in managing technical underwriting including actual undertaking of risk analysis through risk survey and/or inspections of huge risks. Must have experience in managing reinsurance transactions with reinsurance brokers and reinsurers which involves understanding of PML, Catastrophe Modeling, Setting Company Risk Retention. Must also be experienced in managing insurance claims handling including setting up of loss reserves in overseeing Claims Manager functions.

### SUPERVISOR, UNDERWRITING & CLAIMS

Must be a college graduate with a Bachelor's Degree plus 5 years of work experience in insurance business particularly in claims, underwriting, and reinsurance. Must also have knowledge, skills and ability to analyze and manipulate enterprise risk management. Must possess above average communications skills, a working knowledge of MS Word and Excel and the insurance software Geniisys. Must be willing to take cross-functional assignments and adapt to changes necessary for the effective functioning of the organization's business operations.

### CLAIMS OFFICER

College graduate with a Bachelor's Degree preferably in Business Management with 10 years experience in a non-life insurance company particularly in the Claims Department. Must be knowledgeable in automotive, marine, casualty, workers compensation, and property damage adjusting and estimation. Responsible for the evaluation, monitoring and adjustment of claims in accordance with company practices and procedures. Must also be knowledgeable on reinsurance and have the ability to interpret statistical information for reinsurance purposes. Must have excellent customer service skills, time management, written and oral communication skills. Must be computer literate and proficient in MS Office and Oracle-based programs.

### ACCOUNTANT (3)

Must be a college graduate with a Bachelors Degree in Finance and Accounting with at least 5 years work related experience in insurance financial management and payroll and general accounting procedures with emphasis on receivable, payable, and payroll management. Proficient in the use of SAP R3 FICO system, GENIISYS and MS Word and Excel software. Payroll accountant must possess experience in electronic processing of timesheets, allotments, standard and government deductions. Must be able to work under time pressure and flexible hours. CPA not required.

### SYSTEM ANALYST

Must be a college graduate with a Bachelor's Degree in Computer Science/Technology or Management Information Systems with a minimum 4 years experience in computer systems and programming. Must possess a broad knowledge and experience in computer systems, strong problem-solving and analytical skills, and the ability to think logically. Must have knowledge in Oracle server and programming, and a strong experience in insurance data base and program - Geniisys and an indepth experience in insurance business operations. Must have good interpersonal and communication skills.

Applications can be obtained at and submitted to Century Insurance Company (CIC) office at the JP Center Building - Ground Floor on Beach Road Garapan. Salaries will commensurate with qualifications and experience. To be considered, applications must be submitted no later than 5:00PM, Wednesday, December 19, 2012. Background checks and pre-employment drug testing will be required prior to employment.

Century Insurance Company, Inc. is an Equal Opportunity Employer.  
Qualified Women, Minorities, Veterans and Persons with Disabilities are encouraged to apply.

CTSI Logistics is inviting qualified U.S. workers to apply for the following positions:

#### Storage and Distribution Supervisor

Associate's Degree with at least 3 years of distribution and warehousing supervisory experience. Knowledge of household goods handling and airfreight and oceanfreight operations is required. Proficiency in Warehouse management system software is required. Knowledge of Federal Regulations in Transportation is required. Must have obtained certifications/training in Hazmat, Occupational Safety and Hazardous Waste Operation, IICL (Container and Chassis) and Vehicle Safety Guidelines.

#### Shipping Supervisor

Associate's Degree and at least 3 years of shipping, receiving and warehousing supervisory experience is required. Proficiency in shipping operations, shipping documentation & cargo management system software is required. Knowledge of Federal Regulations in Transportation, 49 CFR & IMDG Code is required. Must have obtained certifications/training in Hazmat, Occupational Safety and Hazardous Waste Operation, IICL (Container and Chassis) and Vehicle Safety Guidelines. Knowledge of bill of lading, scheduling and planning inbound and outbound shipments is a must.

#### Transportation Supervisor

Associate's Degree and at least 3 years of logistics and trucking operations supervisory experience is required. Must be knowledgeable in transportation and safety regulations and proficient in various logistic software. Knowledge of Federal Regulations in Transportation is required. Must have obtained certifications/training in Hazmat, Occupational Safety and Hazardous Waste Operation, Emergency Response, IICL (Container and Chassis), Petroleum Standard Operating Procedure and Vehicle Safety Guidelines.

#### Freight Forwarding Supervisor

Associate's Degree with at least 3 years experience in freight forwarding operations and 1-year experience in transportation security and communication related activities. Knowledge of TSA security regulations and proficiency in TSA Known Shipper Management System are a must. Knowledge of Federal Regulations in Transportation is required. Must have obtained certifications/training in Hazmat, Occupational Safety and Hazardous Waste Operation and IATA related trainings. Proficiency in airfreight documentation, freight forwarding software, FEDEX systems and operations are a must. Must be familiar with airline operations and regulations.

#### Shipping and Receiving Clerk (6)

Associate's Degree and at least 2 years work related experience. Must be proficient in MS Office programs as well as other planning and logistics software. Knowledge of supply chain, shipping operations and procedures, document preparation and recordkeeping is required. Should possess good interpersonal and verbal communication skills.

#### Truck Mechanic

Vocational or High School Graduate. Must be able to diagnose, adjust, repair, or overhaul trucks, or maintain and repair any type of engines. Minimum of two (2) year work experience is required on these areas: lubrication, repairs and servicing, use of machine tools, welding and flame cutting, engine elements, gears, brakes, transmission, exhausts, etc. Proficiency in critical devices for fuel tank trucks is a must.

#### Sales Officer

Associate's Degree in Sales or Marketing and at least 3 years work related experience are required as well as an extensive knowledge and experience in supply chain and freight brokerage. Must have his/her own reliable transportation. Can work flexible hours. Must be able to meet monthly sales targets and have extensive contacts in various industries. Proficiency in freight forwarding, shipping and household goods operations are a must. Must be familiar with freight forwarding software.

#### Cargo and Freight Agent (5)

Associate's Degree with a minimum of 2 years experience in a logistics, freight brokerage or warehouse services business. Must know how to operate a forklift with certification. Must be able to do strenuous work with some lifting and carrying of small items on the job. Licensed to drive 4x6 wheel closed vans and must have obtained training or certification in handling hazardous materials, Occupational Safety, Hazardous Waste Operation and IAC CCSF authorized screener. Must be proficient in MS Office and Oracle-based programs and available to work on evenings and weekend hours.

#### Specialized Truck Driver (6)

High School graduate with at least 2 years experience operating trucks or vans with a capacity of at least 10,001 pounds gross vehicle weight (GVW) or 10 to 16-wheeled vehicles. Must have a valid commercial driver's license (CDL). Must have at least 3 years experience in hauling petroleum products with the corresponding SMITHS & STOPS training certification, carrying hazardous materials or oversized loads plus certificates or training in handling hazardous materials and cargoes is a must. Must be able to follow strict safety and operations procedures.

#### Heavy Equipment Truck Driver (3)

High School graduate with at least 2 years experience operating trucks or vans with a capacity of at least 10,001 pounds gross vehicle weight (GVW) or 10 to 16-wheeled vehicles. Must have a valid commercial driver's license (CDL). Experience in carrying hazardous materials or oversized loads plus certificates or training in handling hazardous materials and cargoes is a must. Must be able to follow strict safety and operations procedures.

#### Automotive Body Repairer

Formal Auto Body Training in a Vocational School is required as well as a minimum of one-year experience in repairing and refinishing automotive vehicle bodies' vehicle frames. Proficiency in automotive body painting is required.

#### Janitor

Dependable attendance, hard working and follows directions well. Must be available to work early mornings, late nights and weekends.

A pre-employment drug testing will be required. Salaries will be commensurate with qualification and experience. For applications to be considered, they should be sent to [hrd@ctsispn.com](mailto:hrd@ctsispn.com) not later than December 21, 2012.

We are an Equal Opportunity Employer.  
Women, minorities and disabled persons are encouraged to apply.



# Micronesian chambers of commerce agree to form council

In a historic gathering on Dec. 10 in Guam, representatives of Micronesian chambers of commerce signed a memorandum of understanding that recognizes their desire to form a Micronesian Council of Chambers of Commerce. The MOU was signed by representatives of the chambers of commerce of Palau, Yap, Chuuk, Pohnpei, Kosrae and the Marshall Islands, Guam, Saipan, and Tinian. This is a cooperative arrangement with each other to promote networking among chambers of commerce, promote regional economic and business cooperation through the free flow of business information and trade, and promote investment in the



Representatives of the Palau Chamber of Commerce, the Yap Chamber of Commerce, the Chuuk Chamber of Commerce, the Pohnpei Chamber of Commerce, the Kosrae Chamber of Commerce, the Majuro Chamber of Commerce, the Guam Chamber of Commerce, the Chinese Chamber of Commerce of Guam, the Saipan Chamber of Commerce, and the Tinian Chamber of Commerce sign a Memorandum of Understanding at the Ramada Suites in Guam on Dec. 10.

various island economies.

The gathering was made

possible by the Pacific Islands

Private Sector Organization,

in collaboration with the Palau

Chamber of Commerce and the

Guam Chamber of Commerce.

After the MOU signing, the

meeting proceeded with the roundtable discussions looking at a variety of issues, including power generation, transportation (shipping and aviation), the development of tourism and the potential of a Micronesian cruise strategy, an update on the progress of the military buildup in Guam and its impact on development in the region, workforce development and private sector industry development in Micronesia. Presenters among others included the Pacific Power Organization, Matson Navigation Co., and the Pacific Asia Travel Association.

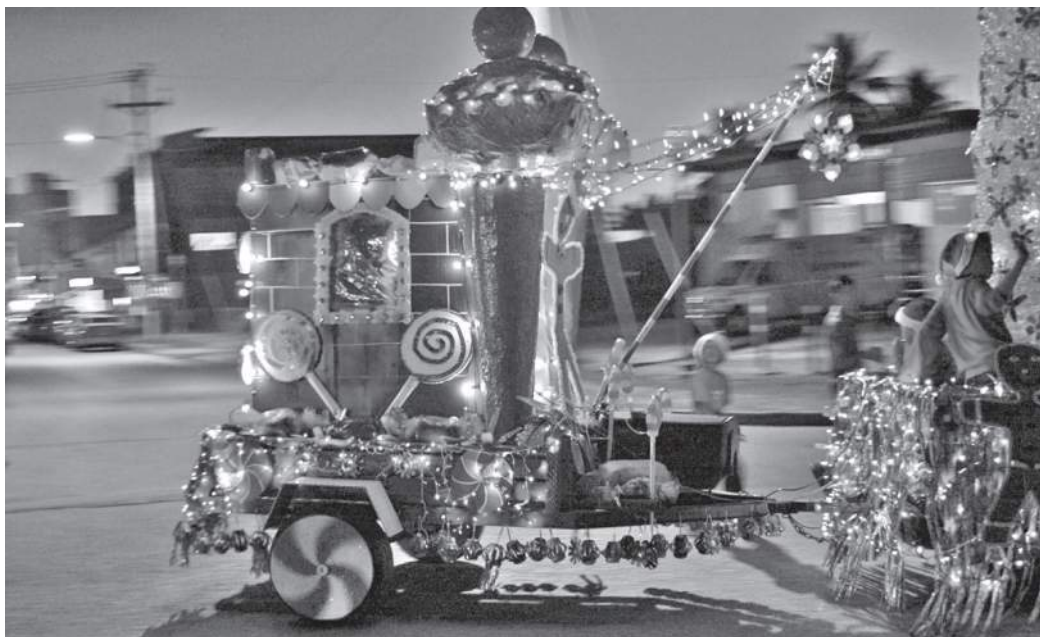
The meeting at the Ramada Suites Guam continued on Dec. 11. (*PIPSO*)

## Christmas in the Marianas caroling and walk on Dec. 15

The Marianas Visitors Authority, Team PDI, Friends of Paseo de Marianas, and other tourism partners continue their full month of holiday festivities this Saturday, Dec. 15, with the Christmas in the Marianas Caroling Competition and Health Walk.

Saturday's festivities will again be held in downtown Garapan at Paseo de Marianas pedestrian mall. The Marianas Walking Association will hold its free 5K Christmas in the Marianas Health Walk beginning at 5pm, while island schools will kick off the caroling competition at 6pm. Competing schools will be Oleai Elementary, Mount Carmel, Koblerville Elementary, Dandan Elementary, Agape Christian, Green Meadow, Kagman Elementary, and Kagman High.

Last Saturday, Dec. 8, spectators were treated to a bright and cheerful Christmas in the Marianas Parade through Garapan, as illuminated school floats and costumed revelers took to the streets just after sunset. Green



Brightly lit floats and costumed revelers highlighted the Christmas in the Marianas Parade in Garapan, Saipan on Dec. 8, 2012. Festivities continue on Dec. 15 with the Christmas in the Marianas Health Walk and Caroling Competition at Paseo de Marianas pedestrian mall in Garapan.

Meadow School took 1st place in the float competition, followed by Kagman High School and Kagman Elementary School tying for 2nd, and Koblerville Elementary in 3rd. The winning

schools won \$1,025, \$600, and \$500, respectively, for their efforts (original prize amounts for 2nd and 3rd place were combined and split evenly between the two schools that tied for

2nd place). Green Meadow also topped the list for best-costumed participants.

Other participating schools were Oleai Elementary, Mt. Carmel High, Koblerville El-

ementary, Dandan Elementary, and Kagman Elementary.

At the pedestrian mall, Christmas Tree Decoration Contest awards and prizes went to San Antonio Elementary School in 1st (\$5,000), Golden Harvest International School in 2nd (\$3,000), and Green Meadow School in 2nd (\$2,000) for their tree entries, which will continue to light up the pedestrian mall every evening during the holiday season.

"Expanding the Christmas in the Marianas celebration to every Saturday has provided more visitors and community members the opportunity to celebrate the season, so it's been a great collaboration this year," said MVA Community Projects Manager Martin Duenas. "Last Saturday at Paseo, residents invited visitors onto the dance floor and it looked like everyone was having a great time."

On Dec. 22 the 4th Annual Mochitsuki Festival, a Japanese rice festival, will be celebrated, inclusive of Japanese cultural activities at Paseo de Marianas. The evening will feature per-

formers from Okinawa and a karate exhibition.

Revelers young and old are invited to the Welcome to the New Year celebration on Dec. 29 with dance and music entertainment from 6pm-10pm. Food and drinks will be sold by Country House, Moby Dick, Jhem's, Sierra's Pearl Shake, Okadaya, E'sy Kitchen, Hula Girl, Lyn's BBQ, Furusato, and Kinpachi Restaurant.

Games, raffles, face painting and other activities are also being held each Saturday evening.

Major sponsors of the Christmas in the Marianas celebration are DOCOMO Pacific, DFS Galleria, Tan Siu Lin Foundation and Kinpachi Restaurant. The event is also supported by the Office of the Governor, First Lady's Vision Foundation, Women's Affairs Office, Division of Environmental Quality, Dept. of Public Safety, Dept. of Public Works, Dept. of Lands and Natural Resources, Div. of Parks & Recreation, Koblerville Youth Learning Center, CNMI Public School System, KKMP, Power 99, and IT&E. (*MVA*)



### JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

#### Position: Supervisor, Food & Beverage (2)

**Qualifications:** Must have 2 years of experience and training. Must be reliable, self motivated and good communicator. Oversee the day to day operations of dining areas, ensuring that the facility remains in compliance with safety regulations and health codes. Observe and evaluate workers and work procedures to ensure quality standards and service. Supervise and participate in dining area cleaning activities. Train workers in service, sanitation and safety procedures. Complete and balance cash receipts at the end of the day or shift. Attends to customer complaints or issues, resolving matter as expediently as possible.

#### Position: Equipment Technician (1)

**Qualifications:** Must have 3 years of experience and training. Knowledge of machines & tools including their designs, uses, repair and maintenance. Record details of repairs made and parts used. Reassemble machine and equipment following repair, test operation and make adjustment as necessary. Maintain, repair and overhaul Golf Course machinery and vehicles such as tractors and irrigation system. Examine and listen to equipment, read inspection reports to locate and diagnose malfunctions. Dismantle the defective machines for repair using hand tools. Test and replace electrical components and wiring using tests meters, soldering equipment and hand tools. Repair & replace defective parts. Clean and lubricate parts. Tune and overhaul engines.

#### Position: Golf Cart Mechanic (1)

**Qualifications:** High School Diploma, 3 years technical training or experienced in mechanical, dismantle engines, using hand tools and examine parts for defects, test and inspect engines to determine malfunctions, to locate missing and broken parts, perform routine maintenance such as cleaning and oiling parts, honing cylinders and tuning ignition system, ability to demonstrate good judgment when dealing with guests or other personnel, able to lift/carry supplies or equipment with frequent reaching, stooping, bending, and kneeling, extensive walking and standing.

Drop off your resume and application at the LaoLao Bay Golf & Resort at the Front Office, Kagman Road. May submit resume online at: [tmatsunaga@laoaobay.com](mailto:tmatsunaga@laoaobay.com)

Deadline to submit Applications is on or before 5:00pm on December 21, 2012.

Saipan LauLau Development, Inc. dba LaoLao Bay Golf & Resort is an Equal Opportunity Employer and Provider.

### National Soccer Coach Director

Bachelor's degree in sports science, physical education or related major plus 5 years of experience in soccer coach education. Must have extensive experience in soccer sports development projects including training development programs for youth, mens and womens national players. Applicant must have A-Class Licensed Coach in soccer or equivalent class license. Can work flexible hours and available on weekends, holidays and weeknights. Must have coaching experience in international football competition in the national level.

Applicants must submit resume' showing all requirements to the Northern Mariana Islands Football Association at the 3rd Floor, TSL Plaza, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan. To be considered, resume' must be submitted no later than 5:00 pm, Monday, December 17, 2012.

### Yano Enterprises, INC.:

**Assistant Manager (1):** Be able to assist the general manager in the supervision of business establishment to ensure the restaurant & stores efficiency & profitable operations; work closely with the personnel in preparation & processing of reservations, greets & answers customers inquiry, patrons complaints & resolve problems. Prepare advertising campaigns of the restaurant & stores to attract customers. Assist in doing daily inventory of foods, merchandise and assets of the business. Duties include but are not limited to delegating authority & assigning responsibilities, reviewing financial transactions & monitoring budget limitations, & be able to present written & oral reports on the company's financial & operational status. Must have Japanese oral skills & knowledge of Japanese food products.

**Restaurant Supervisor (1):** Must be qualified in restaurant operations, customer service, menu planning, & reservation operations. Must be responsible for the supervision of staff as to dining areas cleanliness in appearance & outside grounds. Also need to have basic Japanese oral skills. Must have an extensive knowledge of Japanese food products & be able to make orders & preparations.

**Accountant (1):** Must be efficient in handling financial records, statements, & reports. Have knowledge on all Taxes computation & filing. Must be able to budget & estimate purchasing costs & requisitions of merchandise necessary in the company.

**Cook (5):** Must be experienced & skilled in preparing Japanese cuisine including but not limited to sushi, sashimi, & tempura. Must be able to maintain kitchen & observe safety & sanitary food handling practices as well as other related duties.

**Additional Requirements:** All applicants must be of good health and have a good moral character, must be able to follow grooming standards, must be able to obtain health certificate, must be able to provide current police clearance, with reliable transportation and must agree to drug test.

Applicants of positions listed above are required to have a minimum of 2-5 year experience. Applications can be picked up at Kinpachi Restaurant in Garapan, Hotel Street. Please no phone calls.



# Not your typical Coast Guard operation

The crew aboard the U.S. Coast Guard cutter *Washington* recently visited Ulithi Atoll to deliver humanitarian supplies and teach locals about safe boating practices. *Washington*, a 110-foot patrol boat out of Guam, delivered rice, rainwater collectors, schoolbooks, clothing, and outboard boat engines. These supplies were much needed on the small islands that make up the atoll, as the ship that normally delivers cargo to the atoll has been unable to make the voyage for almost a year due to mechanical problems.

Ulithi Atoll, located in the Federated States of Micronesia, played a major role during World War II. The Navy used the sheltered atoll to repair and resupply its fleet in the Pacific. That history is still very much alive in Ulithi. Remnants of the Pacific Fleet can still be seen everywhere, from an old seaplane ramp to discarded glass bottles. The Coast Guard plays a prominent role in that history, as the service maintained a long range navigation station in the atoll throughout the war and for several years after. One of the elders on Mogmog Island even told the crew he had been raised by Coast Guardsmen after his mother had died in 1947. "The chief of my island made a deal and I lived at the station until 1952. The cook took care of me," he said.

In addition to delivering much-needed goods, *Washington*'s

A crew of the U.S. Coast Guard cutter *Washington* delivers humanitarian supplies to Ulithi Atoll in the Federated States of Micronesia.

U.S. COAST GUARD



ton's crew taught boating safety classes on both Falalop Island and Mogmog Island. These classes covered everything from pre-voyage planning and notifications to radio distress calls and what to do if lost at sea.

"The people of Ulithi are very adept at operating small boats, but they did not have a good understanding of how the Coast Guard searches for small vessels in distress," said Lt. Nate MacKenzie, *Washington*'s commanding officer. "This training gave us the opportunity to explain simple things they could do to drastically increase their chance of being rescued."

"Something as simple as a

soda can cut open and tied to a paddle can help us locate a small vessel with our radar. Small actions like this often mean the difference between a rescue with a happy ending and tragic loss of life at sea," added Ensign Chris Jones.

As a way of saying thanks, the islanders gave the crew fresh coconuts, hand-made flower headbands, shells and even a lesson in basketball. The locals triumphed in a pickup game, 74 to 71. A few lucky members of the crew were even given a tour of Mogmog, the traditional chief island in the atoll. Residents are required to wear traditional clothing and few outsiders are allowed to visit.

The crew did their best to comply with the dress code, in spite of being granted an exemption as guests. Seaman Ryan Dixon summed up the experience, saying, "It was out of this world. Just really cool."

"*Washington*'s motto reads 'Our Cause is Noble.' During the two days spent in Ulithi, we definitely lived up to those words," said MacKenzie of the visit. "We taught people how to stay safe on the water, delivered humanitarian supplies, and maintained a long tradition of positive relations between the U.S. Coast Guard and the proud people of Ulithi. It doesn't get much better than that." (USCG)

## Flashback

A LOOK BACK AT PAST YEARS' HEADLINES

Dec. 13, 1999

### Protecting Managaha equals more grants

The proposed marine conservation area in Managaha island and surrounding waters will pave the way for more federal funding and designation of other protected areas in the Northern Marianas, according to the Coastal Resources Management. Since CRM is the key agency working with the U.S. Coral Reef Task Force, its acting director Peter J. Barlas said the legislative proposal is a step in the right direction toward the success of the local Coral Reef Initiative. "We anticipate future funding from the federal government to achieve the objectives of the CNMI local Coral Reef Initiative which will lead to the delineation and creation of additional [Marine Protected Area] throughout" the island, he said.

### CNMI, RP officials to tap 4 clinics

Public Health Secretary Joseph Kevin Villagomez will meet with the Department of Labor and Immigration and the Philippine Consulate to identify four more reliable clinics that can conduct health screening to nonresident workers seeking employment in the Northern Marianas. With the implementation of Public Law 11-97, Mr. Villagomez said there is a need to begin the search for additional clinics, which is envisioned to improve the reliability of health clearances submitted to DOLI. Public Law 11-97 has set the standards for acceptance of health clearances provided by foreign countries for the purpose of entering the Commonwealth and obtaining work permits.

Dec. 13, 2000

### AGO twits ACOE for 'sloppy job'

The CNMI government has slammed claims by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers on the polychlorinated biphenyl contamination in Tanapag amid efforts by the federal agency to appeal a recent administrative order from the Environmental Protection Agency. Noting reports made by the Army Corps, the Attorney General's Office is questioning whether it is doing its job to clean up areas in the village believed to be contaminated with the highly-toxic chemical, according to assistant attorney general Murphy Peterson. "All we want them to do is... to have the place clean up, do it right, just get it done, but not get it done in your way," he told reporters yesterday.

### EPA: Low PCB concentration on root crops

The level of polychlorinated biphenyl contamination in the samples of taro and yams tested from Tanapag village is at least 10 times lower than the level considered as toxic by guidelines set by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. This was pointed out by EPA Pacific Insular Area Programs Manager Norman L. Lovelace, who added that the findings were based on the unlimited consumption of food with PCB concentration, including shellfish, taro and yams, by children. Mr. Lovelace said the difference on the reporting units of concentration made by EPA and the independent specialists resulted in the confusion which made it appear that the level of concentration is about 1,000 times higher than the actual number.

Dec. 13, 2002

### Quality management seminar offered

Quality management and leadership are necessary in meeting today's global business and economic challenges. Better prepared to meet these challenges are 45 members of government agencies and private organizations who recently completed a "Quality Management and Leadership seminar at the Hyatt Regency-Saipan. The seminar was sponsored by the Northern Marianas College-Community Development Institute. The seminar aims to provide leaders with updated information and basic applied tools, and an understanding of global trends in quality management and change leadership within a Pacific socio-cultural context.

### 'NMI garment industry southbound'

The newest Saipan apparel industry statistics reveal a continued downward trend in overall sales, spending by the factories and taxes paid to the Commonwealth government. According to the Saipan Garment Manufacturers Association, CNMI Customs Service Division reported an almost 15 percent drop in export sales from fiscal year 2001 to 2002, with a 22 percent drop in total sales from 1999 through 2002. A compilation of CNMI Department of Finance tax data from fiscal years 1998 to 2002, industry provided material and independent Industry Economic Impact Reports clearly chart the Saipan factories' slide since 1999, their peak year in activity.

## COMMUNITY BRIEFS

### MHS mid-quarter reports out today

Marianas High School would like to invite all parents and guardians to our 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter Mid-Progress Report today, Dec. 13, 2012, from 4pm to 6pm. All teachers will be distributing the reports at the MHS Gym. Students will be released at 1pm today to allow the school time to prepare for the event. Should you have any questions, call the Main Office at 237-3206/5/3. (PR)

### SSHS mid-progress reports out today

Saipan Southern High School's Term 2 mid-progress report is scheduled to be picked up today, Dec. 13, from 3pm to 6pm. Teachers will be available in their classrooms for parents' and legal guardians' visit. All students will be released at 1:05pm. For more information contact the administrative office at 237-3710. (PR)

### Air Force, Marine Corps training at Warning Area 517, FDM

The U.S. Air Force and U.S. Marine Corps will conduct training at Warning Area 517 on Dec. 14 from 7am to noon, and on the island of Farallon de Medinilla on Dec. 14-15 from 7am to 10pm. The public—especially fishermen, commercial pilots and marine tour operators—are advised to stay clear from the area during the times and dates indicated.

W-517 is an irregular shaped polygon comprising 14,000 nautical square miles of airspace that begins south of Guam and extends south-southwest in international waters. This will affect fishing in the vicinity of Santa Rosa Reef and Galvez Bank. The general location of the training on the island of Farallon de Medinilla training area will be on a 10 nautical mile radius on all quadrants. (PR)

### Progress reports for Kagman schools

For all Kagman schools (Kagman High School, ChaCha Jr. High, and Kagman Elementary School), the North East Cluster Schools' Joint Progress Report is set for release on Wednesday, Dec. 19, 2012. All Kagman schools will have a half-day schedule; dismissal is at 12:45pm.

All teachers from Kagman High School and ChaCha Jr. High School will gather at Kagman Elementary School to distribute the second quarter progress reports on Dec. 19, 2012, from 3pm to 5:30pm.

Teachers will be prepared to give out their contact information (e-mail or work phone) at this event so that parents can make appointments to talk more about a child's progress and follow up from this December meeting.

Kagman High School will distribute progress reports not picked up on Dec. 19 at the GTC Elementary School on Thursday, Dec. 20, from 2pm to 4:30pm or at Tanapag Elementary School on Friday, Dec. 21 from 2pm to 4:30pm. This will allow families in the north access to their high school student's progress report if they cannot make it on Wednesday, Dec. 19.

For more information, call the KHS main office at 664-3840, COJHS at 664-4100, or KES at 664-3911. (PR)

### Change to Energy Star Rebate Program

The CNMI Energy Division is informing all prospective recipients of the Energy Star Rebate Program that the redemption period for all appliance rebate vouchers will now be for 30 days from date of issuance, instead of 90 days, as indicated in the terms and conditions of the program.

All Residential Energy Star Rebate Vouchers must be redeemed within 30 days and not 90 days upon issuance of voucher. Extensions on vouchers will not be granted.

For more information, contact Shawn Pangelinan at CNMI Energy Division/ Energy, Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant Office at 664-4487/4489/4490. (PR)

### Weatherization applications now available

The Weatherization Assistance Program for Low Income Families began its program effective Dec. 1, 2012. WAP applications are available at the Energy Division Office On Capital Hill, building #1337 or by accessing it via the Energy website at: [www.cnmienergy.com](http://www.cnmienergy.com) under Weatherization Assistance Program applications. If you have any questions regarding the program, contact program manager Lorraine M. Seman or Eugene C. Borja, auditor, at 664-4481. (PR)



### BIRTHDAY SHOUTOUT

A belated happy birthday shoutout to our big boss, Mir Mahabubur Rahman aka Panna, who celebrated his birthday on Dec. 12! We wish you all the best in life and more birthdays to come. Greetings come from the staff and management of Toha Supermarket and Phone Store.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO



# Exercise Forager Fury 2012

## FORAGER FURY

A U.S. Marine Corps MV-22B Osprey from Marine Corps Air Station Futenma, Okinawa, Japan, lands on Andersen Air Force Base, Guam, Dec. 7, 2012. Three Ospreys traveled to Guam in support of Exercise Forager Fury 2012. This is the first exercise the Ospreys have participated in since replacing the CH-46 helicopters in Okinawa.

SENIOR AIRMAN BENJAMIN WISEMAN



Three U.S. Marine Corps MV-22B Ospreys from Marine Corps Air Station Futenma, Okinawa, Japan, park on Andersen Air Force Base, Guam, Dec. 7, 2012. SENIOR AIRMAN BENJAMIN WISEMAN



A U.S. Marine Corps MV-22B Osprey from Marine Corps Air Station Futenma, Okinawa, Japan, parks on Andersen Air Force Base, Guam, Dec. 7, 2012. SENIOR AIRMAN BENJAMIN WISEMAN



## SURGE OPERATION

An FA-18D Hornet prepares to receive fuel on Tinian's West Field during simulated surge operation as part of Exercise Forager Fury 2012. Surge operations are slated to last a week, with various types of aircraft receiving ground aviation support from the Marines on Tinian. The Hornet is with Marine All Weather Fighter Attack Squadron 225, which is currently under the Unit Deployment Program with Marine Aircraft Group 12, 1st Marine Aircraft Wing, III Marine Expeditionary Force.

LANCE CPL. JOSEPH KARWICK



A U.S. Navy MH-60S Knighthawk helicopter waits for refueling behind an FA-18D Hornet on West Field here during simulated surge operation as part of Exercise Forager Fury 2012. During the opening hours of the surge, four Hornets and two Knighthawks landed on Tinian and received fuel. The Knighthawk is with Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron 25 out of Anderson Air Force Base, Guam.

LANCE CPL. JOSEPH KARWICK



A U.S. Navy MH-60S Knighthawk helicopter waits for refueling behind an FA-18D Hornet on Tinian's West Field during simulated surge operation as part of Exercise Forager Fury 2012.

LANCE CPL. JOSEPH KARWICK



## DENTAL OUTREACH

Lt. Cmdr. Michael Flannery, right, visits with Maria Quichocho Cruz, middle, and Gabriel Dela Cruz Dec. 6 at the Tinian Senior Center during Exercise Forager Fury 2012. During the visit, the senior citizens also received toothbrushes, dental floss and minor oral exams if they suffered from tooth pain. Flannery is a general dentist with 11th Dental Company, 3rd Dental Battalion, 3rd Marine Logistics Group, III Marine Expeditionary Force.

LANCE CPL. J. GAGE KARWICK



Seaman Jeffrey M. Ker, left, Lt. Cmdr. Michael Flannery, middle, and William Nabors share a laugh at the Tinian Senior Center Dec. 6 during Exercise Forager Fury 2012. Ker is a dental technician and Flannery a general dentist with 11th Dental Company, 3rd Dental Battalion, 3rd Marine Logistics Group, III Marine Expeditionary Force.

LANCE CPL. J. GAGE KARWICK



# Opinion

Hafa Adai!

## Saipan Tribune

THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER  
Volume XXII, Issue No. 290Published daily at 2/F JP Center,  
Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, CNMI  
Mailing Address: PMB 34, Box 10001, Saipan, MP, 96950Jayvee L. Vallejera EDITOR  
Mark Rabago ASSISTANT EDITOR

MEMBER

AP The Associated Press

Pacific Islands News Association

## EDITORIAL

### Global climate talks stall—again

One can just imagine the future “Jeopardy” TV quiz show answer: The name of the international conference that took place in early December 2012 that critics universally panned for accomplishing little despite overwhelming evidence of a global ecological catastrophe on the horizon.

“Alex, what is the Doha Climate Change Conference?” would be the winning question and surely worth a lot to the right contestant. After all, the planet is already in “double jeopardy”—not only from climate change but from the continuing failure of the wealthiest nations to do much about it.

As President Barack Obama is looking to come up with \$60 billion to \$80 billion to offset the worst effects of Hurricane Sandy, a storm that practically shut down New York City, the world’s media center, one would think the call to avoid more such costly catastrophes in the future would be deafening. After all, \$60 billion is pocket change compared to what global warming could do to the United States and other countries from rising sea levels and harsher weather events alone.

It’s certainly not a question of uncertainty in the scientific community. The evidence of record-high carbon dioxide levels is overwhelming. It’s not just that climate change exists, the studies point out that it’s getting worse far faster than previously anticipated.

Yet only the most Pollyanna-ish of diplomats could see U.N. climate negotiations as producing anything of more lasting consequence than hot air. What emerged from Doha, Qatar, was little more than another round of promises—to stick to Kyoto Protocol and to do more in the future (without providing many specifics).

It’s not even clear whether developed countries will do anything to help poorer nations in this regard. The United States wasn’t ready to pledge a definite amount of financial aid. But then that wasn’t shocking considering the uncertain state of the nation’s finances in the midst of “fiscal cliff” talks.

But aren’t most nations in their own fiscal dilemmas? Europeans have been climate change leaders in the past, but they are still trying to get a handle on their own debt crisis. Some of the worst polluters like China and India are not exactly champing at the bit to raise energy costs or potentially limit economic growth.

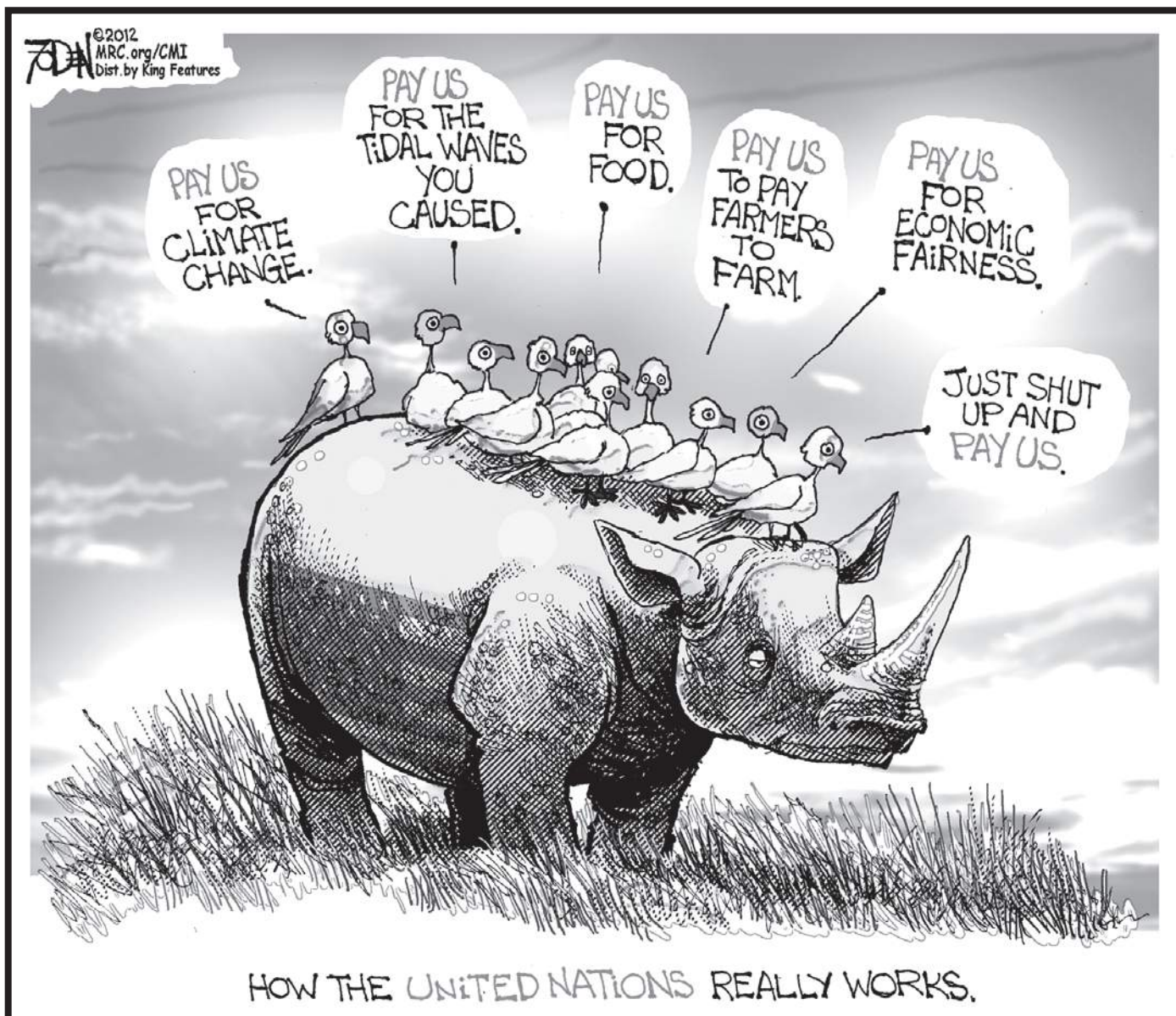
We would be willing to accept any of these rationales if we seriously thought that meaningful climate change solutions were just around the corner. But if not now, when would the stars be aligned? Would they ever? How perfect that the conference was held in Qatar, the country that produces the largest per-capita volume of greenhouse gases in the world but obviously has a less well-developed sense of irony.

That’s not to suggest that all is lost, at least not quite yet. Investment in renewable energy is on the rise in the United States and elsewhere. The growing abundance of natural gas—while hardly an environmental ideal given the uncertainties of “fracking” on the water supply—has reduced the burning of coal, the greatest single source of greenhouse gases.

What’s needed now is an extra incentive for change, or at least a fair accounting of the cost of pollution. The United States and other nations must either institute a tax on carbon or offer emissions “cap and trade” systems to create an economic incentive for alternatives like conservation and non-polluting “green” energy like solar and wind power.

Admittedly, this is a challenging issue. These policies inevitably produce winners and losers. Coal-producing communities are upset while those invested in renewable energy prosper. Foreign aid never wins a popularity contest at the

See GLOBAL on Next Page



## The awesome world of teenager Pi

*The Life of Pi* is Yann Martell’s best selling yarn of the Pondicherry-born Pi (aka Piscine Molitor Patel) made into film under the direction of Ang Lee (Li Ang to the Chinese), the Taiwan-born colleague of Spike Lee and known for directing the controversial *Brokeback Mountain* film of same-sex affections.

Out title for this article is from our feeble translation of the Chinese movie title (the “awesome” may also be translated as “bizarre, weird, strange, illusory and/or magical”) currently showing both on regular and 3D screens. I saw the 3D version, worth the ¥-cost, allowing me to commune with the zoo residents of the old Pondicherry Botanical Gardens up close and personal. Awesome.

I start at the edges.

There is Gérard Depardieu, the renowned French actor and director who is three years our junior but whose recent mid-girth images double ours. He plays a French cook aboard the ill-fated Japanese cargo ship for carnivorous sailors. He had no sympathy for the vegetarian characters from India sailing across the Pacific.

We already mentioned France’s Pondicherry, which is set to introduce the character of Pi and to narrate the circumstances that led to the voyage, long in the book telling but marvelously and powerfully cinematographed at the opening of the movie.

Pi’s family decides to move to Canada with their menagerie when public funds in Pondicherry were no longer extended to the maintenance of the gardens and its animals. Crossing the Marianas Trench, complete with a map and a foreboding “deep” in the movie, they run into a storm that we are only too familiar with in our protracted stays in places like Oahu, Majuro, Nuku’alofa, Kolonia, Hagatña, and Saipan.

The plot thickens to the main story, which is how a vegetarian Hindu-Christian survives 288 days afloat the misnamed “Pacific” ocean with a ferocious fully-fanged misnamed (Richard Parker) Bengali tiger on a 30-passenger lifeboat.

The tongue-in-cheek reference to religious practices and the God-speak is part of the context. Our young teenager Pi embraces Hinduism, Christianity, and Islam before he reaches puberty, to the great dismay of his science-enamored parents who would rather that he makes a choice of practice rather than fall into the nebulous world of the muddled mixed middle.

Then, we get to the final confrontation between the young teenager, the tiger, and the sea.

Facing the wide expanse of the awesome and awful universe, Pi’s Hinduism remains unalterably all embracing in his affirmation of the unfathomable mysteries of his life. Though not shown to be

By JAIME VERGARA

Special to the Saipan Tribune

Jaime R. Vergara (jrvergara2031@aol.com) is a former PSS teacher and is currently writing from the campus of Shenyang Aerospace University in China.



madrasah-trained, with a laser-beamed disciplined awareness of bean counting cans of water and biscuits/wafers, Pi remains alert to the limits of his possibilities and brave enough to know in his bones that if elements in one’s surrounding is non-compliant, like Richard Parker, it can, at least, be trained.

Then life runs into its illusions, actual in Pi’s telling, imagined as a mirage to those familiar with the desert and the open seas. Pi and Parker run into a verdant island, a floating huge algae, hospitable and sustaining during day but acidic and toxic at night. Pi had a pond of fresh water and roots to fill his carb needs, and Parker had thousands of malleable creatures for lunch, but the island turned the evening shadows into a nightmare. The duo survived and after filling up provisions, sailed away.

A strange catholic *pieta* comes through as the exhausted Pi finally cradles on his lap the head of the equally emaciated tiger, the earlier allusion to the mysteries of the Christ of compassion with a *padre* at a Portuguese church. The religious theme got a final brush in the cinematographic tableau before it hit the shores of Mexico.

“I have a story that will make you believe in God,” is a line early on in the novel and in the movie. Hinduism, Christianity, and Islam gets early billing, with Judaism’s Kabbalah getting a line when Pi the professor claims he lectures on the subject also.

Japanese insurance company accountants that covered the cargo ship provide the epilogue segment of the film, interviewing their sole survivor for their report. Pi’s story was too fantastic to be believed, so Pi personified the zebra, hyena, gorilla, and the tiger with those of his parents and the ship’s cook. The accountants’ report stayed with the story of Pi and the tiger.

Belief in God is an account of the real. (Pi’s *pi* in one scene is 3.14, then to the *n*th degree. It is also represented by 22/7, and 335/113, never a whole number!) In any case, however we relate our story, stories reveal beliefs, not beliefs determining stories.

See AWESOME on Next Page



**EDITORIAL POLICY**

Letters to the editor must include the NAME, VILLAGE ADDRESS, and CONTACT NUMBER of the contributor. Letters that do not have these information will immediately be trashed. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

## Obama will struggle to avoid the second-term curse

Scott Fitzgerald famously said that “there are no second acts in American lives.” But reelected presidents are required to try anyway. What’s striking is how often the second acts fail to fulfill the promise of the first.

Let that be a warning to President Obama.

Over the last century, the so-called second-term curse has bedeviled every long-serving leader. Richard M. Nixon was forced from office by the Watergate scandal, whose seeds were sown during Act One. Ronald Reagan was whacked by the arms-for-hostages scandal, which showed that he was asleep at the switch. Bill Clinton was impeached for the Lewinsky scandal, which exposed his wayward attention.

Second-term White House teams are often weary and sometimes sloppy. But all too often, the curse endures because the guy in charge foolishly interprets his re-election as a mandate for sweeping change.

Back in 1936, Franklin D. Roosevelt decided that his landslide re-election gave him license to expand the Supreme Court and pack it with ideological allies; he was thwarted by reinvigorated Republicans in Congress, and his party was thrashed in the ’38 midterm elections.

Most recently, we have the example of George W. Bush. After he won re-election by 3 million votes, he boasted: “The people made it clear what they wanted. I earned capital in the campaign, political capital, and I intend to spend it.”

He decided to spend it on a mission to privatize Social Security. But as 2005 wore on, the more he talked up privatization on the stump, the less the public liked it. He lost his mojo forever in the aftermath of Katrina and the continuing folly of Iraq.

Obama says he’s hip to all this history; a couple of weeks ago, he said he was “more than familiar with all the literature about presidential overreach.” But at least in the short term, he’s clearly been strengthened by his November victory. The trick is to leverage the result without falling prey to hubris.

Obama won re-election by (at last count) 4.67 million votes, a far larger margin than the one Bush interpreted as a mandate in ’04. Moreover, Democratic Senate candidates drew 10 million more

votes nationwide than their Republican opponents, and Democratic House candidates garnered 1 million more votes than GOP candidates as a whole.

Obama clearly has short-term capital to spend in his budget battle with the GOP. He campaigned and won on the proposition that the rich should pay their fair share of taxes. The exit polls showed strong support for an increase in tax rates for households making more than \$250,000 a year, and subsequent polls confirm the sentiment.

At least for now, Republicans on Capitol Hill are feeling the heat, as evidenced by the growing number of lawmakers who are willing to entertain Obama’s demand for higher taxes on the rich—a break from the long-standing absolutist decree that there should be no new taxes on anyone, ever. Even Ann Coulter said on Fox News the other night that the GOP should cave on taxes, stunning Sean Hannity; in her words, “We lost the election, Sean!”

True enough. But if Obama is going to elude the curse, he’ll need to put his win in perspective. Yes, he defeated Mitt Romney by four percentage points in the battleground states, winning nearly all of them. Yes, he assembled a nascent progressive coalition of women, professionals, young people and minorities. But success can be ephemeral. Obama would do well to remember that, a mere seven years ago, everyone was hailing Karl Rove as a strategic genius who had driven the Democrats into indefinite exile.

Political scientist John Burke recently wrote a history of the second-term curse that was posted online by the Center for the Study of the Presidency and Congress. To kill the curse, Burke wrote, a president needs to have “a clearheaded understanding ... of what reelection really means and what power it realistically conveys. It is most likely a vote of confidence. ... It is also, in part, a victory in a popularity contest and/or a rejection of an opponent. As a result, it probably will not yield a policy mandate for a second term. It surely is not a license to chase ideological dreams.”

Obama has the whip hand in the current budget battle, and that may give him momentum for immigration reform and other ful-

By **DICK POLMAN**

The Philadelphia Inquirer

*Dick Polman is a columnist for the Philadelphia Inquirer. Readers may write to him at: Philadelphia Inquirer, P.O. Box 8263, Philadelphia, Pa. 19101, or by email at dpolman@phillynews.com; blog: <http://www.dickpolman.blogspot.com>.*



filled promises. His problem, inherent in the contemporary political process, is that he has a very brief window of opportunity—at most, 18 months. Though now in disarray, Republicans will surely cease their intramural sniping and regroup for the 2014 midterms. And the day after those election results are announced—with the incumbent’s party likely to have taken a beating, another facet of the second-term curse—everyone will be chattering about 2016, easing Obama further into lame-duck mode.

He could beat the traditional curse by scoring breakthroughs on climate change, job creation, education, and infrastructure repair, but that’s akin to saying that a frog could defy gravity by flying. His agenda would cost a lot of money, and it’s a fair bet that the usual suspects—the special-interest lobbies, the right-wing think tanks, and the conservative media-entertainment complex—will reconstitute themselves and push back with a vengeance. Elections come and go; those forces are permanent.

Obama has a shot at defying the odds, but only if he can energize his voters, involve them in governance, and enlist them to counterbalance the Republican right.

The alternative is to acknowledge the following: “Second terms are almost inevitably downhill. The tendency is for an administration to run out of steam.” So said Richard Nixon shortly before he raised the curtain on Act Two.

## Truth about Medicare age

By **NANCY PELOSI**  
USA TODAY

The scenario is not so far-fetched: an American worker nears retirement. Her 65th birthday is drawing close. She’s paid into Medicare her entire life, expecting it to be there to cover her health care in her golden years—just like it was for her parents.

She’s worked hard and played by the rules. She’s upheld her end of the bargain, and her children’s and grandchildren’s economic security depends on a strong, sustainable Medicare.

But, when the time comes, she’s faced with a system that’s changed and where the goal posts have moved because Republicans in Congress demanded that the eligibility age for Medicare rise. It was their trophy in the talks on the fiscal cliff—the price they asked seniors to pay before they voted to ask the wealthiest to pay their fair share.

Americans have not had to deal with the reality of this scenario since the advent of Medicare more than 45 years ago. Yet in the talks to avert the fiscal cliff, the idea of raising the Medicare age is central to the Republican proposal. There’s just one critical problem: It doesn’t work. It doesn’t have public support. It’s unfair. And it doesn’t lower health expenditures.

Such a proposal is a reflection of the broader Republican plan: an assault on the middle class, seniors—and our future. Republicans like to talk about their ideas in terms of abstract numbers. However, we cannot ignore the adverse impacts of their policies on the American people.

Raising the Medicare eligibility age is a case in point. On paper, it appears to save money for the federal government. In practice, it simply shifts the cost of health care to newly uninsured 65- and 66-year-olds,

forcing them to pay more for their care out of their own pockets. It makes older Medicare beneficiaries pay higher premiums.

Under the Republican plan, it shifts costs to employers who wish to do right by their workers and cover their retirees for two additional years. It adds costs to states, as low-income seniors find themselves forced to seek out coverage through Medicaid.

It raises premiums for younger Americans who don’t receive insurance through their jobs and who are set to purchase coverage through new insurance exchanges. It asks them to foot the bill to cover the cost of insuring the many 65- and 66-year-olds who would enter the system at the same time.

As one expert, Paul N. Van de Water of the Center for Budget and Policy Priorities, has noted, taking this step “would not only fail to constrain health care costs across the economy; it would increase them.” In fact, the Kaiser Family Foundation estimates that higher state and private sector costs would be twice as large as the total federal savings.

The overall impact, according to Van de Water, is that “total health care costs would rise, some seniors would end up uninsured, and many would face unaffordable out-of-pocket costs.”

Put another way: raising the Medicare age asks the most vulnerable citizens to pay more with little to show for it in terms of long-term deficit reduction or more affordable care, for seniors or anyone else. It increases health spending across-the-board. It takes money out of the pockets of a small slice of Americans.

We can do better—and we have. Democrats are the only ones who have enacted a plan that extends the solvency of Medicare without cutting benefits through the Affordable Care Act.

Make no mistake: Democrats are ready to discuss even more savings that extend the life of Medicare without hurting beneficiaries.

Doha is history, but it doesn’t require a United Nations full of negotiators for the United States and other countries to take more forceful action. President Obama can lead the charge by revisiting the nation’s energy policies in 2013. The people who went to the polls last month knew which candidate favored stronger action in this arena and voted for him. A line needs to be drawn in the sand—even if that wasn’t possible in Qatar.

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For three thousand years, humankind told their story in God-speak, too. In the life of this meat-eating former teenager from Northern Philippines, God walked away without saying “goodbye” as well. “For Unto Us a Child is Born” is the season’s wondrous and awesome theme, not the Magi’s appearance, and their going away without saying goodbye.

I am with Pi on God in this one.

We should reduce health expenditures and build on our work in the Affordable Care Act to slow the growth of health costs. We should be strengthening Medicare, not undermining it.

The Republican plan, which would be phased in over more than a decade, may sound simple enough. But remember: it is brought to you by the same people who think it’s a good idea to end the Medicare guarantee and turn Medicare into a voucher system—putting seniors at the mercy of insurance companies.

Raising the Medicare age represents more of the same. For seniors nearing retirement, it means less security for themselves and their families. It betrays the bedrock promise of Medicare: that Americans who work hard and take responsibility all their lives can know dignity in their later years.

For the sake of America’s seniors and their families, our middle class, and our country, let’s enact a plan that creates jobs, strengthens the middle class, grows the economy, and reduces the deficit in a balanced, responsible way.

*Rep. Nancy Pelosi of California, the first female speaker of the House, is the current House Democratic leader.*

## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

### An open letter to the public

The Tinian & Aguiguan Legislative Delegation is deeply saddened by the recent experience of a tourist vacationing on our beautiful island of Tinian. Although terrible crimes like this happen all around the world, we regret that our visitor had to experience it while here in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. Please know that the actions of one individual do not reflect on our entire culture, which is built on love and respect for all. We offer our sincerest apologies to this individual—who wishes to remain anonymous—and hope that s/he enjoys the remainder of his/her stay.

Tourism is the main industry of Tinian and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands and we must do all we can to ensure that our tourists are safe and comfortable throughout the duration of their stay. Accordingly, the Delegation pledges to work together with the relevant agencies on Tinian and improve the safety of both our tourists and our tourist attractions. We also request for the public to support our tourism industry by exhibiting true “Hafa Adai” spirit and island hospitality to all our island guests.

Again, we sincerely apologize to our visitor and will work to make sure that this type of incident does not happen in the future.

Sinseramente,

The Tinian & Aguiguan Legislative Delegation

## GLOBAL

From Page 10

polls. But the difficulty and complexity of the challenge can’t be used as an excuse for inaction. How many Hurricane Sandy-like storms of unusual strength and disastrous consequence will be required to convince leaders that current energy policies are a threat to our national security?

## AWESOME

From Page 10






Pi’s complaint was that the tiger never even bothered to say “goodbye.” In an earlier episode before he left Pondicherry and his first heart-throb, Pi recalled that the parting did not include uttering “goodbye.”



Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam Homepage: [www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/](http://www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/)

# The Weather

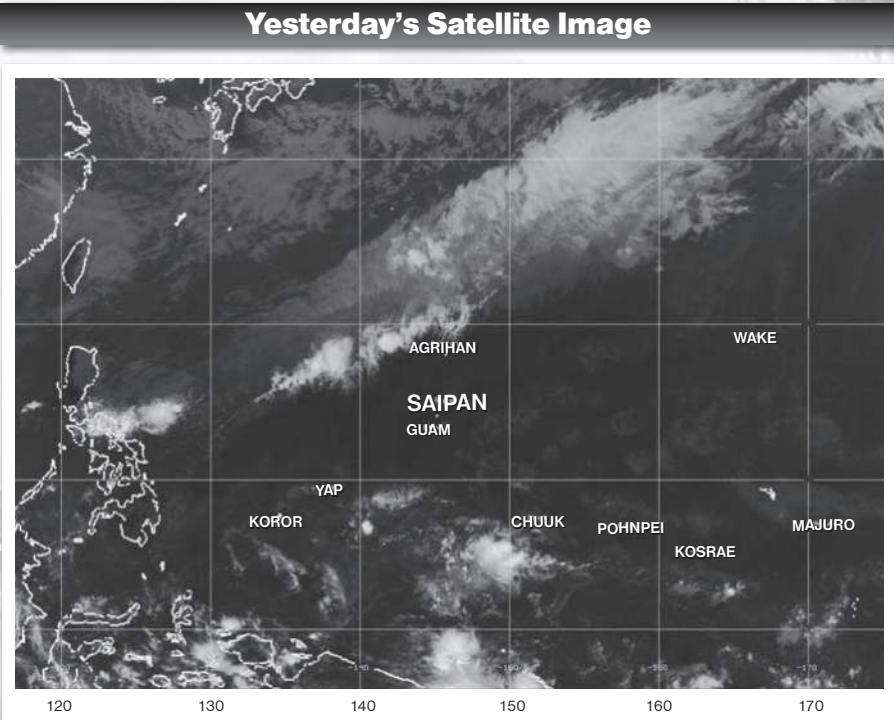
## 5-Day Forecast for Saipan and Tinian

TODAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY
				
Partly cloudy with isolated showers. Northeast winds 10 to 20 mph.	Mostly cloudy and breezy with isolated showers. Northeast winds 15 to 25 mph.	Mostly cloudy and breezy with isolated showers. Northeast winds 15 to 25 mph.	Mostly cloudy with isolated showers.	Mostly cloudy with isolated showers.
▲ 88° ▼ 77°	▲ 86° ▼ 77°	▲ 86° ▼ 75°	▲ 87° ▼ 79°	▲ 88° ▼ 75°

Micronesia		
Guam and Rota	Sunny	▲ 88 ▼ 79
Palau	Showers	▲ 85 ▼ 77
Yap	Mostly Sunny	▲ 89 ▼ 77
Chuuk	Showers	▲ 87 ▼ 79
Pohnpei	Sunny	▲ 87 ▼ 78
Kosrae	Sunny	▲ 87 ▼ 78
Majuro	Partly Cloudy	▲ 87 ▼ 80

Around The Globe		
Auckland	Partly Cloudy	▲ 71 ▼ 60
Beijing	Ice	▲ 41 ▼ 23
Hong Kong	Partly Cloudy	▲ 73 ▼ 67
Honolulu	Showers	▲ 80 ▼ 71
London	Rain	▲ 52 ▼ 44
Los Angeles	Rain	▲ 58 ▼ 42
Manila	Partly Cloudy	▲ 86 ▼ 80
Melbourne	Rain	▲ 73 ▼ 65
Miami	Showers	▲ 81 ▼ 64
New York	Sunny	▲ 44 ▼ 33
Osaka	Mostly Cloudy	▲ 53 ▼ 39
Paris	Rain	▲ 47 ▼ 41
Pusan	Rain	▲ 57 ▼ 41
Rome	Showers	▲ 53 ▼ 44
Salem	Showers	▲ 45 ▼ 39
San Francisco	Sunny	▲ 55 ▼ 47
Seoul	Ice	▲ 38 ▼ 29
Tokyo	Mostly Cloudy	▲ 52 ▼ 34
Washington, DC	Sunny	▲ 51 ▼ 35

Tides			
Saipan Harbor			
1:10 AM	Today	Low Tide:	0.7 Feet
8:13 AM	Today	High Tide:	2.0 Feet
1:29 PM	Today	Low Tide:	1.2 Feet
6:32 PM	Today	High Tide:	2.2 Feet



**PICTURE TIME: 1:00PM, WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 12, 2012**  
Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

A nearly stationary front undulates southwestward from north of Wake Island at 25N164E through weak circulations centered just south of Minami Tori Shima at 24N155E and northwest of Yap at 17N136E to beyond 130E at 15N. Extensive cloudiness and patchy rain are present along and up to 600 miles northwest of this boundary. A surface trough runs northwestward from 3N152E to 6N147E. Scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms are occurring southwest of Chuuk between 3N and 6N from 146E to 151 E. Trade-wind convergence is generating scattered showers over Kwajalein and just north of Majuro within 75 miles of a line from 9N167E to 8N177E.

Sunrise/Sunset			Moonrise/Moonset		
Today	6:34 AM	5:48 PM	Today	6:04 AM	5:45 PM
Friday	6:35 AM	5:49 PM	Friday	7:08 AM	6:50 PM
Saturday	6:35 AM	5:49 PM	Saturday	8:08 AM	7:54 PM
Sunday	6:36 AM	5:50 PM	Sunday	9:02 AM	8:55 PM
Monday	6:36 AM	5:50 PM	Monday	9:52 AM	9:53 PM

## GET YOUR PICTURES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS PUBLISHED—FOR FREE

The *Saipan Tribune* accepts for FREE publication the following:

**PICTURES**

- ISLAND SNAPSHOTS  
Birthdays, baptisms, christenings, family gatherings, reunions, club activities, and other community-related events.
- BIRTHDAY GREETINGS  
A way for families and friends to greet their loved ones, accompanied by a picture of the person celebrating his/her birthday.
- BUSINESS  
Corporate donations, volunteer work, promotions, granting of awards, team-building exercises, meetings and other activities by members of the business community.
- SAMUT SARI  
Pictures from the islands' Filipino community, primarily focusing on Filipino activities, gatherings, get-togethers, volunteer work, etc.
- TRAVELOGUE  
Pictures of off-island travels. Contributors may submit up to 10 pictures for consideration.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- COMMUNITY BRIEFS

Announcements of upcoming activities of organizations, community clubs, government agencies, and private companies.

■ **CAMPUS BULLETIN**  
Announcements of upcoming activities in public and private schools, as well as calendar of activities. May include PTSA meetings, enrollment procedures.

**REQUIREMENTS**

**For pictures:**

- Photos should be original and not copyrighted. Contributors must have the right to allow the *Saipan Tribune* to publish the pictures.
- Digital pictures should be high-resolution (minimum of 800kb).
- Must have complete details (who, what, where, when), the name of contact person, and phone number.
- Photos must have been taken in the last two months.
- For birthday greetings, must be submitted no later than 12 noon of the previous day to make it to next day's edition.

**For announcements:**

- Must have complete details (who, what, where, when),

the name of contact person, and a phone number.

- Must be submitted no later than 12 noon to make it to next day's edition.

**HOW TO SUBMIT**

- E-mail: [editor@saipantribune.com](mailto:editor@saipantribune.com) or [jayvee\\_vallejera@saipantribune.com](mailto:jayvee_vallejera@saipantribune.com).
- Fax: (670) 235-3740
- Mail: PMB 34, P.O. Box 10001, Saipan, CNMI 96950
- Drop off: 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan

To check if contributions are received, call (670) 235-6397, 235-2440, 235-8747

**POLICY**

- The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to accept or reject a contribution for publication; the right to edit all contributions, the date of publication, size of the picture, and page placement; and the right to publish contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats.
- The *Saipan Tribune* will decide how often community announcements are going to be published.
- For Travelogue, the *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to choose which pictures to publish.

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**SUBSCRIPTION** Published Monday to Saturday, *Saipan Tribune* offers door-to-door on-island delivery at an annual rate of \$160. For additional subscription information, call (670) 235-8747 or 235-2769, or fax 235-3740.

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## NMI CRIME STOPPERS

Anonymous tips can now be submitted through the following:

- Call 234-7272 (PARA) on any telephone
- \*11 on any PTI cellular phone
- Log on to the internet at [www.nmicrimestoppers.com](http://www.nmicrimestoppers.com)

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF NOV. 21, 2012									
DEPARTURES					ARRIVALS				
SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)					GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN				
UA5070	4:35am	5:25am	2, 4, 6, 7		UA 5069	2:45am	3:35am	2, 4, 6, 7	
UA5062	4:40am	5:30am	1, 3, 5		UA5071	7:05am	7:55am	Daily	
UA5068	8:25am	9:15am	Daily		UA5073	9:50am	10:40am	Daily	
UA5074	11:10am	12:00pm	1, 4, 5, 7		UA5075	1:45pm	2:35pm	1, 4, 5, 7	
UA5076	3:10pm	4:00pm	Daily		UA5077	5:35pm	6:25pm	Daily	
UA5078	6:55pm	7:45pm	Daily		UA5079	8:20pm	9:10pm	Daily	
UA5072	9:45pm	10:35pm	Daily						
SAIPAN-NARITA (NRT)					NARITA (NRT)-SAIPAN				
DL287	6:00am	8:40am	Daily		DL298	10:25am	3:00pm	Daily	
DL297	4:25pm	7:20pm	Daily		DL288	8:40pm	1:15am+1	Daily	
SAIPAN-PUSAN (BUS)					PUSAN (BUS)-SAIPAN				
OZ608	3:10am	6:20am	4, 6, 7		OZ607	9:00pm	1:50am+1	3, 5, 6	
OZ608	3:30am	6:40am	3		OZ607	9:35pm	2:25am+1	2	
SAIPAN-SEOUL (ICN)					SEOUL (ICN)-SAIPAN				
OZ606	2:10am	6:00am	1		OZ603	9:00am	2:20pm	Daily	
OZ606	2:40am	6:30am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7		OZ605	7:40pm	1:00am+1	7	
OZ604	3:20pm	7:10pm	Daily		OZ605	8:10pm	1:30am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6	
SAIPAN-SHANGHAI (PVG)					SHANGHAI (PVG)-SAIPAN				
3U8648	6:10am	8:40am	1, 4, 5, 7		3U8647	10:40pm	5:00am+1	3, 4, 6, 7	
SAIPAN-BEIJING (PEK)					BEIJING (PEK)-SAIPAN				
MU7108	2:50am	5:55am	1, 3, 5		MU7107	6:30pm	1:50am+1	2, 4, 7	
SAIPAN-GUANGZHOU (CAN)					GUANGZHOU (CAN)-SAIPAN				
3U8646	4:20am	7:30am	2, 6		3U8645	7:40pm	3:00am+1	1, 5	
SAIPAN-VLADIVOSTOK (VVO)					VLADIVOSTOK (VVO)-SAIPAN				
VLK1734	2:00am	8:15am	5 every other week		VLK1733	8:00pm	12:05am+1	4 every other week	
SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)					MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN				
OZ606/701	2:10am	11:15am	1		OZ704/603	12:10am	2:20pm	Daily via ICN	
OZ606/701	2:40am	11:15am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7		DL172/288	8:00am	1:15am+1	Daily via NRT	
UA5070/191	4:35am	9:55am	3, 6 via GUM		UA190/5077	10:55am	6:25pm	3, 6 via GUM	
DL287/173	6:00am	10:20pm	Daily via NRT		UA190/5079	10:55am	9:10pm	3, 6 via GUM	
UA5076/183	3:10pm	9:25pm	2, 5 via GUM		UA702/605	12:10pm	1:00am+1	7 via ICN	
UA5076/183	3:10pm	9:45pm	1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via GUM		OZ702/605	12:10pm	1:30am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via ICN	
OZ604/703	3:20pm	11:00pm	Daily via ICN		PR110/UA5071	10:10pm	8:00am+1	1, 3, 5, 6, 7 via GUM	
UA5072/PR111	9:55pm	7:50am+1	1, 3, 5, 6, 7 via GUM		UA184/5071	10:55pm	7:55am+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via GUM	
					UA184/5071	11:59pm	7:55am+1	2, 5 via GUM	
SAIPAN-HONG KONG (HKG)					HONG KONG (HKG)-SAIPAN				
OZ606/721	2:10am	11:50am	1 via ICN		OZ746/603	12:30am	2:20pm	Daily via ICN	
OZ606/721	2:40am	11:50am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN		OZ724/605	1:50pm	1:00am+1	7 via ICN	
UA5076/147	3:10pm	10:30pm	1, 5 via GUM		OZ724/605	1:50pm	1:30am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via ICN	
OZ604/749	3:20pm	11:20pm	Daily via ICN		UA180/5073	11:25pm	10:40am+1	1, 5 via GUM	
LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); 3U: Sichuan Airlines; MU: China Eastern; UA: United Airlines; DL: Delta Airlines; OZ: Asiana; VLK: Vladivostok Air.					ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. The <i>Saipan Tribune</i> is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)				

FREEDOM AIR FLIGHT SCHEDULE									
Airline	ETD	ETA	Frequency	Airline	ETD	ETA	Frequency	Airline	ETD
Guam-Rota				FRE 115	13:00	13:10	Daily		
FRE 100	7:30	8:00	Daily	FRE 117	14:30	14:40	Daily		
Rota-Saipan				FRE 119	16:00	16:10	Daily		
FRE 100	8:20	8:50	Daily	FRE 121	16:40	16:50	Daily		
Guam-Rota				FRE 123	17:40	17:50	Daily		
FRE 300	17:00	17:30	Daily	FRE 125	18:30	18:40	Daily		
Rota-Saipan									
FRE 400	18:55	19:25	Daily	Tinian-Saipan					
Saipan-Rota				FRE 102	7:05	7:15	Daily		
FRE 200	9:30	10:00	Daily	FRE 104	7:50	8:00	Daily		
Rota-Guam				FRE 106	8:20	8:30	Daily		
Saipan-Rota	10:20	10:45	Daily	FRE 108	9:00	9:10	Daily		
FRE 400	18:55	19:25	Daily	FRE 110	10:00	10:10	Daily		
Rota-Guam				FRE 112	11:05	11:15	Daily		
FRE 400	19:40	20:10	Daily	FRE 114	12:00	12:10	Daily		
Saipan-Tinian				FRE 116	13:30	13:40	Daily		
FRE 101	6:45	6:55	Daily	FRE 118	14:50	15:00	Daily		
FRE 103	7:30	7:40	Daily	FRE 120	16:20	16:30	Daily		
FRE 105	8:00	8:10	Daily	FRE 122	17:00	17:10	Daily		
FRE 107	8:40	8:50	Daily	FRE 124	18:05	18:15	Daily		
FRE 109	9:10	9:20	Daily	FRE 126	18:50	19:00	Daily		
FRE 111	10:45	10:55	Daily						



Business

US defends \$1.9B deal with British banking giant

**NEW YORK (AP)**—American authorities on Tuesday cited “astonishing” dysfunction at the British bank HSBC and said that it had helped Mexican drug traffickers, Iran, Libya and others under U.S. suspicion or sanction to move money around the world.

HSBC agreed to pay \$1.9 billion, the largest penalty ever imposed on a bank.

The U.S. stopped short of charging executives, citing the bank’s immediate, full cooperation and the damage that an assault on the company might cause on economies and people, including thousands who would lose jobs if the bank collapsed.

Outside experts said it was evidence that a doctrine of “too big to fail,” or at least “too big to prosecute,” was alive and well four years after the financial crisis.

The settlement avoided a legal battle that could have further savaged the bank’s reputation and undermined confidence in the banking system. HSBC does business in almost 80 countries, so many that it calls itself “the world’s local bank.”

Lanny A. Breuer, assistant attorney general of the Justice Department’s criminal division, cited a “stunning, stunning failure” by the bank to monitor itself. He said that it enabled countries subject to U.S. sanction—Cuba, Iran, Libya, Myanmar and Sudan—to move about \$660 million in prohibited transactions through U.S. financial institutions, including HSBC, from the mid-1990s through September 2006.

Officials noted that HSBC officers in the United States had warned counterparts at the parent company that efforts to hide where financial transactions originated would expose the bank to sanctions, but the protests were ignored.

HSBC even instructed an Iranian bank in one instance how to format messages so that its financial transactions would not be blocked, Breuer said at a news conference announcing the settlement.

“The record of dysfunction that prevailed at HSBC for many years is simply astonishing,” Breuer said.

For the government not to go a step further and prosecute was “beyond obscene,” said Bill Black, a former U.S. regulator for the Office of Thrift Supervision who now teaches at the University of Missouri-Kansas City.

“Regulators are telling us, ‘Yes, they’re felons, they’re massive felons, they did it for years, they lied to us, and they made a lot of money ... and they got caught red-handed and they’re gonna walk.’”

Black disputed the government’s concern that indicting HSBC could take down the financial system.

“That’s the logic that we get stability by leaving felons in charge of our largest banks,” he said. “This is insane.”

Breuer defended the government’s agreement with HSBC. He said that U.S. employees in particular seemed duped by criminal enterprises taking advantage of HSBC oversight policies that over decades became increasingly lax.

Court documents showed that the bank let over \$200 trillion between 2006 and 2009 slip through relatively unmonitored, including more than \$670 billion in wire transfers from HSBC Mexico, making it a favorite of drug cartels and money launderers. HSBC Bank USA at the time rated Mexico in its lowest risk category.

Top executives who felt “the pressure of the bottom line” continually cut staff that might have discovered how criminal enterprises were taking advantage of the bank, Breuer said.

Settlements

Since 2009, six large foreign banks have paid settlements to the U.S. to resolve claims brought by the U.S. Justice Department, the Treasury and the Manhattan District Attorney’s Office of money laundering and violating U.S. sanctions:

The allegations			
HSBC	2012	Transferred money for sanctioned nations such as Iran; enabled Mexican drug cartels to move money through U.S.	\$1.9 billion
ING	2012	Moved money through U.S. system on behalf of Cuban, Iranian customers	619 million
CREDIT SUISSE	2009	Hid illegal business with Iranian banks	536 million
Lloyds TSB	2009	Helped customers avoid sanctions on doing business with Sudan, Iran, Libya	350 million
Standard Chartered	2012	Processed transactions for Iranian, Sudanese clients through its U.S. subsidiaries	327 million
BARCLAYS	2010	Made illegal transactions with banks in Cuba, Libya, Sudan, Myanmar	298 million

Source: AP, New York Times  
Graphic: Pat Carr

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Lawyer: Guatemala judge orders McAfee released

**GUATEMALA CITY (AP)**—A lawyer for John McAfee said Tuesday that a judge has ordered the software company founder released from a Guatemalan detention center where he has been fighting being returned to Belize.

Attorney Telesforo Guerra said the judge notified him verbally of the ruling, but added that it might take a day for formal written notification to win McAfee’s release, possibly as soon as Wednesday.

Judge Judith Secaida did not immediately return phone calls seeking to confirm the ruling.

Guerra said Secaida ruled that McAfee’s detention was illegal, ordered him released, and gave him 10 days to put his immigration situation in order. It was not immediately clear if McAfee could get some kind of temporary or transit visa to allow him to leave Guatemala.

McAfee has said he wants to return to the United States with his 20-year-old Belizean girlfriend. Guerra said that would be his client’s best option.

“For me, it’s best that McAfee go to the United States, that’s definitely the country where he will be safest,” Guerra said. “In Guatemala, he runs the risk that anything could happen to him.”

McAfee was detained last week for immigration violations after he sneaked into Guatemala from neighboring Belize. He had been on the lam for weeks before that, saying he donned disguises to avoid Belizean police who want to question him in the fatal shooting in November of another U.S. expatriate, Gregory Viant Faull.

The victim lived a couple of houses down from McAfee’s compound on Ambergris Caye, an island off Belize’s Caribbean coast. McAfee acknowledges that his dogs were bothersome and that Faull had complained about them, but denies killing Faull.

McAfee has said corrupt Belizean authorities are persecuting him, something officials in Belize deny. McAfee says he fears for his safety in Belize because he has sensitive information about official corruption and refused to donate to local politicians.

In a live-stream Internet broadcast Sunday from the Guatemalan detention center where he was put under the government order that he be returned to Belize, the 67-year-old McAfee said he wants to return to the United States and “settle down to whatever normal life” he can.

“I simply would like to live comfortably day by day, fish, swim, enjoy my declining years,” he said.

McAfee is an acknowledged practical joker who has dabbled in yoga, ultra-light aircraft and the production of herbal medications. He has led an eccentric life since he sold his stake in the software company named after him in the early 1990s and moved to Belize about three years ago to lower his taxes.

Global corporate deals nearly halved in 5 years

**LONDON (AP)**—The value of global mergers and acquisitions deals in 2012 was nearly half the amount made five years ago, when the global financial crisis was first baring its teeth, a leading accounting and consulting firm said Wednesday.

According to Ernst & Young, the value of global M&A was 47 percent lower in 2012 at a projected \$2.25 trillion, against 2007’s \$4.3 trillion. It noted a shift in activity from developed economies to high-growth ones in Asia and Latin America—the value of deals in the U.S. halved while those in China doubled.

There were a little under 37,000 deals worldwide, around 9,000 less than in 2007, when many companies indulged in a feverish bout of deal-making, many of which led to their financial ruin. Much of the blame for Royal Bank of Scotland PLC’s near-collapse in 2008, which eventually required a government bailout, was due to its over-priced purchase of a large chunk of Dutch bank ABN Amro the year before.

The excess of corporate deals in 2007 contributed to the near freezing of credit markets that year and paved the way for the global banking crisis in 2008 and the subsequent global recession. But it’s not to blame for the current drop in deal making.

Ernst & Young said this year’s slump in corporate activity was mainly due to the uncertainty created by the debt crisis afflicting the 17 European Union countries that use the euro as well as fears over the impending “fiscal cliff” of automatic spending cuts and tax increases in the U.S.

“Acute caution was the prevailing M&A sentiment in 2012,” said Pip McCrostie, global head of Ernst & Young’s M&A division. “The eurozone crisis continues to impact 9 global companies in every 10 and in 2012 we saw its impact reduce the appetite for M&A, even in many formerly deal-hungry emerging markets. Limited deal activity will likely continue through 2013, especially if we don’t see a clear, long term resolution to the fiscal cliff.”

One clear impact of the eurozone debt crisis in Europe has been to lower the currency bloc’s share of the deals that do take place. In 2007, the eurozone accounted for around 21 percent of the global value of M&A. That’s now down at 11 percent.

While the eurozone has suffered its litany of problems, the so-called BRIC countries—the fast-growing economies of Brazil, Russia, India and China—are filling the gap.

Michigan lawmakers approve right-to-work bills

**LANSING, Mich. (AP)**—Over the chants of thousands of angry protesters, Republican lawmakers made Michigan a right-to-work state Tuesday, dealing a devastating and once-unthinkable defeat to organized labor in a place that has been a bastion of the movement for generations.

The GOP-dominated House ignored Democrats’ pleas to delay the final passage and instead approved two bills with the same ruthless efficiency that the Senate showed last week. One measure dealt with private-sector workers, the other with government employees. Republican Gov. Rick Snyder signed them both within hours, calling them “pro-worker and pro-Michigan.”

“This is about freedom, fairness and equality,” House Speaker Jase Bolger said during the floor debate. “These are basic American rights - rights that should unite us.”

After the vote, he said, Michigan’s future “has never been brighter, because workers are free.”

The state where the United Auto Workers was founded and labor has long been a political titan will join 23 others with right-to-work laws, which ban requirements that nonunion employees pay unions for negotiating contracts and other services.

Supporters say the laws give workers more choice and support economic growth, but critics insist the real intent is to weaken organized labor by encouraging workers to “freeload” by withholding money unions need to bargain effectively.

Protesters in the Capitol gallery chanted “Shame on you!” as the measures were adopted. Union backers clogged the hallways and grounds shouting “No justice, no peace.” And Democrats warned that hard feelings over the legislation and Republicans’ refusal to hold committee hearings or allow a statewide referendum would be long lasting.

U.S. Sen. Carl Levin and other Democrats in the state’s congressional delegation met with Snyder on Monday and urged him to slow things down.

“For millions of Michigan workers, this is no ordinary debate,” Levin said after the House vote. “It’s an assault on their right to have their elected bargaining agent negotiate their pay, benefits and working conditions, and to have all who benefit from such negotiations share in some way in the cost of obtaining them.”

The crowds were considerably smaller than those drawn by right-to-work legislation in Indiana earlier this year and in Wisconsin in 2011 during consideration of a law curtailing collective bargaining rights for most state employees. Those measures provoked weeks of intense debate, with Democrats boycotting sessions to delay action and tens of thousands of activists occupying statehouses.

In Michigan, Republicans acted so quickly that opponents had little time to plan massive resistance.

Snyder and GOP leaders announced their intentions last Thursday. Within hours, the bills were hurriedly pushed through the Senate as powerless Democrats objected. After a legally required five-day waiting period, the House approved final passage.

The governor said he saw no reason not to sign the bills immediately, especially with demonstrators still hoping to dissuade him.



# Nation

## Cliff' movement? Obama, Boehner trade proposals

WASHINGTON (AP)—In a test of divided government, President Barack Obama and House Speaker John Boehner sought an elusive compromise Tuesday to prevent economy-damaging tax increases on the middle class at year's end, conferring by phone after a secretive exchange of proposals.

Details were sparse and evidence of significant progress scarcer still, although officials said the president had offered to reduce his initial demand for \$1.6 trillion in higher tax revenue over a decade to \$1.4 trillion.

There was no indication he was relenting on his insistence—strongly opposed by

most Republicans - that tax rates rise at upper incomes.

Boehner sounded unimpressed in remarks on the House floor at midday.

"The longer the White House slow-walks this process, the closer our economy gets to the fiscal cliff," he said, declaring that Obama had yet to identify specific cuts to government benefit programs that as part of an agreement that also would raise federal tax revenue.

The Ohio Republican made his comments well before he and the president talked by phone about attempts to avert a "fiscal cliff," across-the-board tax increases and cuts in de-

fense and domestic programs that economists say could send the economy into recession.

In rebuttal, the White House swiftly detailed numerous proposals Obama has made to cut spending, including recommendations to cull \$340 billion from Medicare over a decade and an additional \$250 billion from other government benefit programs.

The House Democratic leader, Rep. Nancy Pelosi of California, challenged Boehner to allow a vote on the president's proposal to extend most expiring tax cuts while letting them lapse at higher incomes.

She predicted it would gain



### What should we do?

Americans want Washington to solve the looming budget crisis but reject almost every option to do that, according to a new McClatchy-Marist poll.

#### Does the deal matter?

- Does it matter whether Obama and the Republicans make a deal or not?

Yes, it matters

71%

No

26%

Unsure: 2%

#### The tax cut options

- Should Bush tax cuts expire and taxes raised on individual income above \$200,000, families above \$250,000?

Support

57%

Oppose

40%

Unsure: 3%

- Let Bush tax cuts expire, raise taxes for everyone?

Support

24%

Oppose

74%

Unsure: 2%

- Let Obama payroll tax cut expire?

Support

33%

Oppose

50%

Unsure: 17%

Source: McClatchy-Marist poll of 1,246 adults, Dec. 4-6, 2012; margin of error: +/-2.8 percentage points  
Graphic: Judy Treible

#### What about Medicare?

- Should spending on Medicare (health insurance for the elderly) be cut?

Support

23%

Oppose

74%

Unsure: 3%

- Raise the age to receive Medicare from 65 to 67?

Support

40%

Oppose

59%

Unsure: 1%

#### Deal or no deal?

- Should government officials compromise to find a solution or stand on principle even if it means gridlock?

Compromise

74%

Stand on principle

21%

Unsure: 5%

- If there is no deal between Obama and Congress, who is more to blame?

Republicans in Congress

47%

President Obama

36%

Both

11%

Unsure: 6%

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"overwhelming approval," even in the GOP-controlled House.

Two weeks before the year-end holidays, time to find agreement was short, but not prohibitively so.

"I think it's going to be extremely difficult to get it done before Christmas but it could be done," said Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid.

Boehner's office took the step—unusual in secretive talks—of announcing that Republicans "sent the White House a counteroffer that would achieve tax and entitlement reform to solve our looming debt crisis and create more American jobs."

Obama dispatched a top aide, Rob Nabors, to the Capitol for talks afterwards.

Both sides say they want a deal to prevent damage to the economy, but that stated commitment has been accompanied by a fierce battle to gain the political high ground in negotiations—and the occasional comment that one side or the other would be willing to let the deadline pass without a deal unless it got acceptable terms.

Republicans acknowledge that Obama has an advantage in one respect, citing his reelection last month after a race in which he made higher taxes on the wealthy a centerpiece of his campaign.

## Gunman opens fire in Portland mall; 3 dead



AP

Witnesses are interviewed by a Clackamas County deputy outside Clackamas Town Center in Portland, Ore., where a shooting occurred, Tuesday, Dec. 11, 2012.

PORTLAND, Ore. (AP)—A masked gunman wearing camouflage opened fire Tuesday in a busy Portland mall, leaving the gunman and two others dead and forcing the mall's Santa Claus and hundreds of Christmas shoppers and employees to flee or hide among store displays.

Austin Patty, 20, who works at Macy's, said he saw a man in a white mask carrying a rifle and wearing a bulletproof vest. He heard the gunman say, "I am the shooter," as if announcing himself. A series of rapid-fire shots in short succession followed as Christmas music played. Patty said he ducked to the ground and then ran.

His Macy's co-worker, Pam Moore, told The Associated Press the gunman was short, with dark hair. Witnesses said he started firing just outside Macy's in the food court of Clackamas Town Center.

Brance Wilson, the mall Santa, said he heard gunshots and dove for the floor. By the time he looked up, seconds later, everyone around him had cleared out. Merchandise was

scattered in some stores as he made his way to the door.

"Santa will be back," Wilson said. "It's not going to keep Santa away from the mall."

Police said they have tentatively identified the gunman but would not release his name or give any information on a possible motive. Officials said a woman was also shot and was in serious condition at a Portland hospital.

"We have a young lady in the hospital fighting for her life right now," Clackamas County Sheriff Craig Roberts at a news conference late Tuesday.

Clackamas Town Center is one of the Portland area's biggest and busiest malls, with 185 stores and a 20-screen movie theater. It would remain closed at least through Wednesday, Roberts said.

Shaun Wik, 20, from Fairview, said he was Christmas shopping with his girlfriend and opened a fortune cookie at the food court. Inside was written: "Live for today. Remember yesterday. Think of tomorrow."

As he read it, he heard three

shots. He heard a man he believes was the gunman shout, "Get down!" but Wik and his girlfriend ran. He heard seven or eight more shots. He didn't turn around.

"If I had looked back, I might not be standing here," Wik said. "I might have been one of the ones who got hit."

Kira Rowland told KGW-TV that she was shopping at Macy's with her infant son when the shots started.

"All of a sudden you hear two shots, which sounded like balloons popping," Rowland told the station. "Everybody got on the ground. I grabbed the baby from the stroller and got on the ground."

Rowland said she heard people screaming and crying.

"I put the baby back in the stroller and ran," Rowland said.

Holli Bautista, 28, said she was shopping at Macy's for a Christmas dress for her daughter when she heard pops that sounded like firecrackers.

"I heard people running and screaming and saying 'Get out, there's somebody shooting,'" she told the AP.

## W.Va. gas line explodes, burns homes and roads

SISSONVILLE, W.Va. (AP)—Four homes went up in flames and collapsed in charred heaps Tuesday after a natural gas line exploded in an inferno that raged for at least an hour, melting guardrails and pavement on a swath of Interstate 77.

Five other homes had extensive external damage, and several people were treated for smoke inhalation, but authorities said there were no fatalities and all residents had been accounted for.

"We've been very fortunate," said Gov. Earl Ray Tomblin, who toured the damage then briefed

the media. "They were just lucky enough not to be home."

Most were at work. One man had just left to go hunting, he said.

State Police spokesman Sgt. Michael Baylous said a slight risk of a secondary explosion remained, so people who had initially been told to stay inside nearby homes were later urged to evacuate.

The explosion occurred between Sissonville and Pocahontas just before 1 p.m. in a 20-inch transmission line owned by NiSource Inc., parent of Columbia Gas. The gas flow was shut off, but State Police 1st Sgt. James

Lee said there was still pressure on the transmission line.

Kent Carper, president of the Kanawha County Commission, said flames had been shooting 50 to 75 feet into the air before the fire was extinguished.

"It sounded like a Boeing 757. Just a roar," he said. "It was huge. You just couldn't hear anything. It was like a space flight."

Trevor Goins lives about a half-mile from the explosion and was watching television in his apartment when he saw a ripple in his coffee cup and the floor shook.

## Families fear Sandy killed cottages, traditions

BRIGANTINE, N.J. (AP)—The small yellow cottage has always been more than a house to Bob Bratek and his family. It was their tiny slice of ocean-front heaven, a repository of family memories built in the '60s with the hands of three generations of Brateks and any materials they could find.

"It was made of pieces and hearts and souls and emotions and memories," Bratek said, remembering how he would ride there as a teenager in the family station wagon, its freight of free siding and donated wood causing the back to practically

scrape the highway.

Superstorm Sandy battered the Brateks' home and other seaside bungalows and cottages passed down through families that scrimped and saved to buy small getaways on the Jersey Shore. Now many families that see themselves as stewards of an heirloom are grappling with whether it is affordable, or even possible, to rebuild.

For some, Sandy may have washed away any chance of another generation going "down the shore," as trips to the ocean are known in New Jersey, to anything other than a rented

condo or motel.

Many cottages passed down through generations are owned outright and did not have flood insurance, because they didn't have mortgages, or didn't have enough insurance to replace what they lost. Even before the superstorm, many middle- and working-class families struggled to maintain the properties and to pay high property taxes.

Anthony Cappuccio, owner of Boardwalk Design and Development in the coastal community of Margate, said many families have inquired about whether they can be rebuilt.



# Asia

## NKorea defies warnings, launches long-range rocket

SEOUL, South Korea (AP)—North Korea appeared to successfully fire a long-range rocket Wednesday, defying international warnings as the regime of Kim Jong Un pushes forward with its quest to develop the technology needed to deliver a nuclear warhead.

Pyongyang's state media quickly claimed that the country had succeeded in its mission of putting a peaceful satellite into orbit with its long-range Unha-3 rocket. Officials at the North American Aerospace Defense Command, or NORAD, said North Korea appeared to have put an object into space.

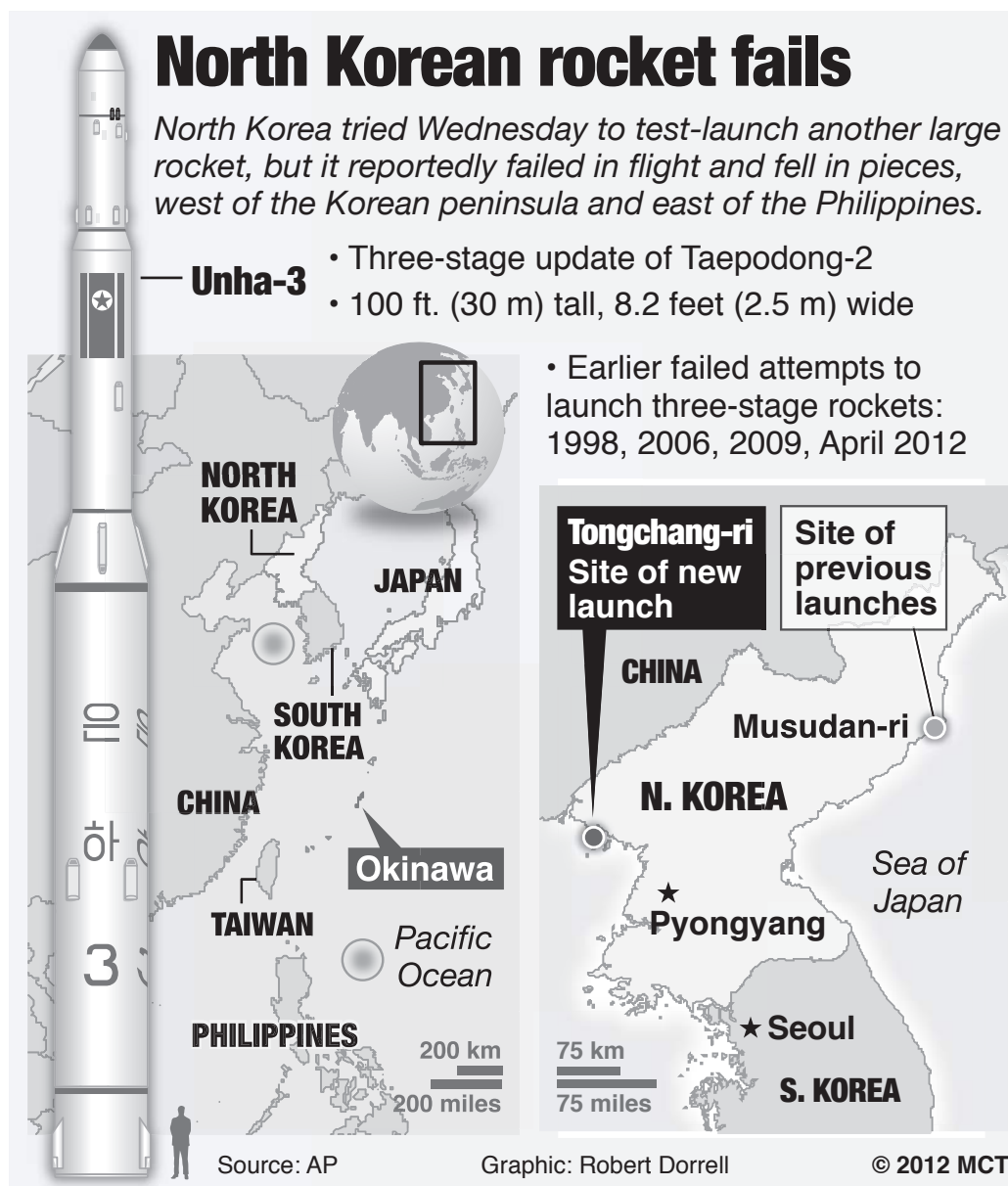
But South Korea and Japan said they couldn't immediately confirm that. The launch was something of a surprise, as North Korea had indicated technical problems with the rocket and recently extended its launch window to Dec. 29.

**TOKYO (AP)—Japan says North Korea has fired a rocket and debris landed in seas off the Korean Peninsula and the Philippines.**

Government spokesman Osamu Fujimura said the rocket was fired Wednesday morning but urged Japanese people to go on with their lives as normal. He protested against the launch, saying it was not something that should be allowed.

Fujimura said debris landed west of the Korean Peninsula and east of the Philippines.

The United Nations, Washington,



Seoul and others see the launch as a cover for a test of technology for missiles that could be used to strike the United States. The White House called the launch a "highly provocative act that

threatens regional security."

South Korean Defense Ministry spokesman Kim Min-seok told a nationally televised news conference that a South Korean Aegis-equipped destroyer de-

tected the launch at 9:51 a.m., local time, and the first stage fell into the Yellow Sea about a minute later; the rocket then flew over a South Korean island near the border with North

Korea a minute after that. The rocket was seen flying west of Okinawa at 9:58 a.m., and then disappeared from South Korean radars, Kim said.

William Lewis, a spokesman for the U.S. North American Aerospace Defense Command, which tracks such launches, had no immediate information about the reported launch.

Japan protested the launch and said one part of the rocket landed west of the Korean Peninsula, and the Philippines said another part landed 300 kilometers (186 miles) east of the Philippines. South Korean President Lee Myung-bak planned an emergency national security council meeting Wednesday, and South Korean Foreign Minister Kim Sung-hwan warned that North Korea will face grave consequences.

Japan's Foreign Ministry said Tokyo immediately requested consultations on the launch within the U.N. Security Council.

Jonathan McDowell of the Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics said officials would likely have to wait a day or so to see if the United States can track anything that might have been placed in orbit by North Korea.

Success would be defined as "something that completes at least one orbit of the earth," he said. But "clearly this is much more successful than their last attempt. It's at least as good as they've ever done. They've proved the basic design of it."

### ASIAN BRIEFS

#### Activists: 8th Tibetan child self-immolates

**BEIJING (AP)—**A teenage girl set herself on fire on the grasslands of an ethnic Tibetan region in western China, becoming the eighth child to self-immolate to protest Chinese rule over the region, rights groups said. Wangchen Kyi, 17, self-immolated and died in China's western Qinghai province Sunday evening after calling for the long life of the Tibetan people and their exiled spiritual leader, the Dalai Lama, according to the Washington-based International Campaign for Tibet. The group cited reports from exiled Tibetans in contact with people in the area. Activists say more than 90 people have set themselves on fire in Tibetan areas since February 2009, with an upsurge in recent weeks. The vast majority have been in their late teens and 20s.

#### Riots, bombs in Bangladesh opposition-led strike

**DHAKA, Bangladesh (AP)—**Explosions of homemade bombs were reported in Bangladesh's capital Tuesday as opposition activists enforcing a daylong general strike rioted and clashed with police. Police fired tear gas to disperse crowds of people who were smashing vehicles. It was not immediately clear if anyone was injured in the violence described by witnesses and television reports in parts of Dhaka. A coalition of 18 opposition parties was enforcing the strike to demand that a caretaker government be formed before the next national elections due in 2014. A key coalition partner also wants its leaders facing charges of crimes against humanity to be freed from jail.

#### Malaysia nets 1,500 elephant tusks headed to China

**KUALA LUMPUR, Malaysia (AP)—**Malaysian authorities have seized 1,500 elephant tusks in a \$20 million shipment that was believed to have been headed to China. Customs official Azis Yacub says inspectors at Port Klang harbor last week found 24 tons of unprocessed tusks hidden in secret compartments in containers of timber. He says the shipment originated from Togo and sailed to Spain, where it was transferred to another ship before arriving in Malaysia. He said in a statement received Wednesday that intelligence showed the shipment was to be moved to another ship before heading to China. No arrests have been made.

## CHRONOLOGY OF NKOREA'S NUCLEAR, MISSILE PROGRAMS

By The ASSOCIATED PRESS

Developments in North Korea's nuclear and ballistic missile programs:

- Aug. 31, 1998: North Korea fires suspected missile over Japan and into the Pacific Ocean, calling it a satellite.
- Sept. 13, 1999: North Korea pledges to freeze long-range missile tests.
- March 10, 2003: North Korea fires land-to-ship missile off east coast into waters between Korean Peninsula and Japan.
- October 2003: North Korea fires two land-to-ship missiles.
- May 2005: North Korea fires short-range missile into waters between Korean Peninsula and Japan.
- March 8, 2006: North Korea fires two short-range missiles.
- July 5, 2006: North Korea launches seven missiles into waters between Korean Peninsula and Japan, including long-range Taepodong-2.
- July 15, 2006: U.N. Security Council adopts Resolution 1695 demanding North Korea halt missile program.
- Oct. 9, 2006: North Korea conducts underground nuclear test blast

after citing "extreme threat of a nuclear war" from U.S.

- Oct. 15, 2006: U.N. Security Council adopts Resolution 1718 condemning test, imposing sanctions and banning North Korea from activities related to its nuclear weapons program, including "their means of delivery."

- July 14, 2007: North Korea shuts down main Yongbyon nuclear reactor, later starts disabling it.

- Sept. 19, 2008: North Korea says it will restore atomic reactor.
- Oct. 11, 2008: U.S. removes North Korea from list of states that sponsor terrorism.

- April 5, 2009: North Korea launches long-range rocket. Two of three stages push rocket over Pacific but third stage fails. Despite North Korea's claims of success, no satellite reaches orbit, the U.S. North American Aerospace Defense Command says.

- April 13, 2009: U.N. Security Council adopts presidential statement condemning North Korea's rocket launch.

- April 14, 2009: North Korea quits six-party nuclear talks and vows to restart nuclear facilities in protest against the U.N. statement.

- May 25, 2009: North Korea conducts second nuclear test.

- June 12, 2009: U.N. Security Council adopts Resolution 1874 sanc-

tioning North Korea for nuclear test.

- June 13, 2009: North Korea says it will start enriching uranium.

- Jan. 11, 2012: North Korea test fires three short-range missiles.

- Feb. 29, 2012: North Korea announces moratorium on nuclear and long-range missile tests in food aid deal with U.S.

- March 16, 2012: North Korea announces plan to launch rocket in April to put scientific satellite into orbit.

- April 13, 2012: North Korea launches long-range rocket from west coast site. Rocket fizzles shortly after liftoff. Pyongyang acknowledges failure. The United States announces it will not carry out food aid deal with North Korea.

- April 19, 2012: North Korea says it has figured out cause of failure and pledges to continue rocket launches as part of space program.

- June 9, 2012: North Korea denies planning nuclear test following failed rocket launch.

- Dec. 1, 2012: North Korea declares intention to launch another long-range rocket mounted with satellite between Dec. 10 and 22.

- Dec. 9, 2012: North Korea announces extension of launch window to Dec. 29 due to an unidentified technical deficiency in rocket.

- Dec. 12, 2012: North Korea launches long-range rocket.

## Taliban popular where US fought biggest battle

**MARJAH, Afghanistan (AP)—**Nearly three years after U.S.-led forces launched the biggest operation of the war to clear insurgents, foster economic growth and set a model for the rest of Afghanistan, angry residents of Helmand province say they are too afraid to go out after dark because of marauding bands of thieves.

And during the day, they say corrupt police and government officials bully them into paying bribes. After 11 years of war, many here long for a return of the Taliban. They say that un-

der the Taliban, who routinely punished thieves by cutting off a hand, they were at least safe from crime and corruption.

"If you had a box of cash on your head, you could go to the farthest part of Marjah and no one would take it from you, even at night," said Maulvi Daoud, who runs a cubbyhole sized-shop in the town of Marjah. "Today you bring your motorcycle in front of your shop and it will be gone. Now the situation is that you go on the road and they are standing in

police and army uniform with weapons and they can take your money."

It was in the town of Marjah in early 2010 that some 15,000 NATO and Afghan forces waged the war's biggest battle. They not only fought the Taliban with weapons, they promised to bring good governance to Marjah and the rest of the southern province of Helmand—and demonstrate to the residents the advantages of shunning the militants.

But it appears the flaw in the plan was with the quality of Af-

ghans chosen by President Hamid Karzai to govern and police the area after most of the fighting ended. And that adds to growing doubts about the entire country's future after foreign troops withdraw by the end of 2014.

Despite military claims of gains across the province and an overall drop in violence, Marjah residents told The Associated Press that NATO's counterinsurgency experiment has failed. A bleak picture also emerges from anecdotal evidence collected from dozens of inter-

views with residents elsewhere in the province, some from the most violent districts.

Many claim the U.S.-funded local police, a type of locally sanctioned militia, routinely demand bribes and threaten to accuse those who do not comply of being members of the Taliban. Good governance never came to Marjah, they say.

In villages of sun-baked mud homes, at crowded bus stops and in local tea houses where residents sit cross-legged on plastic-covered tables drinking tea and eating off communal plates, people scoffed at claims of security and development.



## World

## Gaza's tunnels rebound from Israeli offensive

**RAFAH, Gaza Strip (AP)**—Rafah's biggest industry is back in business: Gazans are rebuilding the network of underground smuggling tunnels crisscrossing the Egyptian border that were pummeled in a recent Israeli offensive, restoring the illicit conduit for consumer goods and weapons so crucial to Hamas rule.

The 12-kilometer (eight-mile) slice of land at the Gaza Strip's southern tip is humming around the clock with workers carting in cement, bricks, gravel and scaffolding. The quick rebound has raised questions about how much damage Israel inflicted on the tunnels during last month's eight-day air offensive.

Anwar Abu Lebdeh and seven other workers were laying bricks on a recent day to rebuild the entrance to a 500-meter (550-yard) tunnel battered by an Israeli airstrike last month. Nearby, workers hauled cement sacks on their shoulders, and a bulldozer lifted gravel onto a nearby truck. After loading up at tunnel sites, trucks lumbered over to Hamas government points to pay taxes on their cargo.

"It's our source of life, this is the only job we could find. I have been working here for five years," said Abu Lebdeh, 24, who had to slog through mud left by heavy rain to get the job done.

The tunnel industry has become key to Gaza's economy since Israel and Egypt imposed a blockade on the territory after Hamas seized power there in 2007.

The tunnels ferry in a wide range of items besides essentials, including Chinese motorcycles, farm and zoo animals, appliances—and large Iranian rockets that can hit Tel Aviv.

Responding to months of daily rocket salvos from Gaza, last month Israel unleashed its air



In this Tuesday, Nov. 27, 2012 file photo a Palestinian man works at the entrance of a destroyed smuggling double tunnels area along the Egypt Gaza border in Rafah, southern Gaza Strip.

force, starting with an airstrike that killed Hamas commander Ahmed Jabari. In eight days, the Israeli military carried out more than 1,500 airstrikes on militant targets, including rocket-launching sites, weapons storehouses and dozens of the roughly 500 smuggling tunnels operating under the short border.

Israel claimed it "successfully targeted 140 smuggling tunnels in order to impair Hamas weapons smuggling capabilities." Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu this week told reporters that the offensive had "dramatically reduced" the Hamas arsenal.

Hamas has also claimed victory. Despite losing dozens of fighters, Gaza militants managed to

fire some 1,500 rockets into Israel during the violence, hitting the Tel Aviv area several times and ending with a heavy barrage on the last day before an Egyptian-brokered cease-fire took hold.

It remains unclear how hard the smuggling industry was hit. Hamas estimates Israel bombed 60 percent of the tunnels, said government spokesman Ihab Ghusein. Some were damaged and quickly repaired. Others were flattened.

Tunnel operators say dozens remain out of commission, but they are quickly rebuilding them. The Israeli army acknowledges that smuggling has resumed, though it would not say whether this includes

new weapons.

Tunnel operators, pointing off into the distance, said there are tunnels reserved exclusively for Hamas shipments, presumably weapons.

Evidence of the vast amounts of weaponry in the tiny territory came after Israel's offensive.

For the first-ever visit to Gaza over the weekend of the exiled leader of Hamas, Khaled Mashaal, thousands of masked Hamas militants deployed throughout Gaza to protect his convoy, brandishing rocket-propelled grenades, assault rifles and anti-aircraft weaponry.

The tunnels run underground from Gaza to houses on the Egyptian side of the border.

While Egypt has launched periodic crackdowns on weapons smuggling, smugglers say the Egyptians generally ignore the movement of construction materials, fuel and consumer goods. There was no immediate comment from Egypt.

The smuggling tunnel business has been around for at least 15 years, but it got a major boost when Israel and Egypt's then-President Hosni Mubarak clamped the borders shut after Hamas seized control of Gaza from the forces of Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas in 2007. Israel also imposed a naval blockade, saying it was needed to prevent weapons from entering the territory.

## Egypt judges say most will boycott referendum

**CAIRO (AP)**—Most Egyptian judges rejected any role Tuesday in overseeing the country's constitutional referendum, a move likely to cast further doubt on the legitimacy of the disputed charter.

The nation's worst crisis since Hosni Mubarak's ouster nearly two years ago also forced the government to put off a crucial deal with the International Monetary Fund for a \$4.8 billion loan, shattering any hope for recovery of the country's ailing economy anytime soon.

On one side of the divide is President Mohammed Morsi, his Muslim Brotherhood and their ultra-conservative Islamist allies, against an opposition camp of liberals, leftists and Christians who contend the draft charter restricts freedoms and gives Islamists vast influence over the running of the country.

An unexpected twist came when the defense minister, a Morsi appointee, invited the opposition, along with judges,

media leaders and Muslim and Christian clerics to an informal gathering Wednesday, saying he was doing so in his personal—not an official—capacity.

It was the second time this week that the nation's powerful military has addressed the crisis, signaling its return to the political fray after handing over power in June to Morsi, Egypt's first civilian president.

The military sees itself as the guarantor of Egypt's interests and secular traditions. Earlier this week, it warned of disastrous consequences if the crisis over the country's draft constitution is not resolved.

"We will only sit together ... For the sake of every Egyptian, come and disagree. But we won't be cross with one another or clash," Defense Minister Abdel-Fatah el-Sissi, said on state television.

"We are not concerned with politics. We want to reassure the people that we can sit together,"

added Maj. Gen. Mohammed el-Assar, el-Sissi's deputy, speaking on a private TV network.

The opposition said it would not participate in any meeting that was nothing more than an informal gathering. The Brotherhood said it would attend.

Egypt's political crisis began on Nov. 22 when Morsi issued a decree granting himself—and the Islamist-dominated panel that drafted the constitution—immunity from judicial oversight or challenge, sparking mass demonstrations.

The constituent assembly then hurriedly approved the draft constitution in a marathon overnight session, prompting hundreds of thousands of the president's opponents to take to the streets in massive rallies—the largest since the uprising that toppled Mubarak in February 2011.

The vast majority of Egypt's judges, meanwhile, said Tuesday they would not oversee the referendum on the draft constitution.

## Venezuela VP: Hugo Chavez recovering after surgery

**CARACAS, Venezuela (AP)**—Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez was recovering in Cuba on Tuesday after an operation targeting an aggressive cancer that has defied multiple treatments and has prompted the socialist leader to name a political successor.

Vice President Nicolas Maduro spoke on Venezuelan television after the surgery, saying that "it's been a complex operation." He indicated that the surgery lasted more than six hours and said it was completed "correctly and successfully."

Maduro, who was designated by the president on Saturday as his preferred political heir, made the announcement in Caracas flanked by other Chavez aides and military commanders. Maduro then led an outdoor vigil where the president's supporters joined hands in prayer and sang along with a recording of Chavez singing the national anthem.

"We've lived through complex moments of tension," Maduro

said, without giving details.

It was the fourth cancer-related operation that Chavez has undergone since June 2011.

Three days before the surgery, Chavez announced that he needed to have surgery again after tests showed "some malignant cells" had reappeared in the same area of his pelvic region where tumors were previously removed.

Chavez said beforehand that the surgery would present risks.

Afterward, Maduro said that Chavez had been moved to a room to recover and begin "special treatments" under the care of a team including medical experts from Venezuela, Cuba and elsewhere.

With Chavez in Havana were his children and grandchildren as well as political allies including National Assembly President Diosdado Cabello and Oil Minister Rafael Ramirez, Maduro said.

"We're waiting for you here,"

## WORLD BRIEFS

## Colombia military reform slammed by rights groups

**BOGOTA, Colombia (AP)**—Against strong objections from rights activists, Colombia's Congress overwhelmingly approved a constitutional amendment Tuesday night to give military courts greater jurisdiction over crimes committed by armed forces members. Colombia's military has a checkered human rights record that has in the past led U.S. lawmakers to selectively withhold aid from tainted units. Winning final approval in the Senate by a 57-7 vote, the law is widely considered a gesture by President Juan Manuel Santos to placate the military brass, whose support he needs in peace talks with Colombia's largest leftist rebel group to end a half-century-old conflict.

## Ruby, key witness in Berlusconi trial, in Mexico

**ROME (AP)**—The Moroccan woman at the center of ex-Premier Silvio Berlusconi's pay-for-sex trial has turned up in Mexico after missing a court date and becoming entangled in Italy's latest political drama. News agency ANSA reported Tuesday that Karima el-Mahroug, known as Ruby, notified her attorney of her whereabouts after reading that her absence Monday had sparked a minor uproar in court. Attorney Paola Boccardi informed the court Tuesday that Ruby wasn't expected back until next month, ANSA said. Berlusconi is accused of paying Ruby, then 17, for sex during his notorious "bunga bunga" parties, and using his office to cover it up. Both deny the accusations.

Maduro said, addressing Chavez on television. "You have to return, and we're waiting for you here, your children, we who've sworn to be loyal to you even beyond this life."

Maduro added: "If there were another life, we'd be loyal and we'd be your soldiers forever."

After he spoke, some of the president's supporters in a Caracas plaza broke into chants of "El Comandante will live!"

Supporters held a prayer meeting in downtown Caracas while the surgery was under way, singing hymns.

"We ask God, to allow him to live," said Carmen Romero, who participated in the gathering. Some held up posters of Chavez as they sang.

On the city's streets, Venezuelans on both sides of the country's deep political divide voiced concerns about Chavez's condition and what might happen if he ultimately doesn't survive his illness.



# Focus

## Why efforts to stop factory fires have failed

By ALLEN G. BREED, ANNE D'INNOCENZIO and SCOTT MAYEROWITZ  
ASSOCIATED PRESS

About a year and a half before a fire at a clothing factory in Bangladesh killed 112 people in November, executives from Wal-Mart, Gap and other big retailers met nearby to discuss ways to prevent the unsafe working conditions that have made such tragedies common.

Representatives from a dozen of the world's largest retailers and fashion labels gathered with labor groups and local officials in April 2011 at the three-day meeting held in the 15-story, glass-walled headquarters of the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers & Exporters Association in Dhaka, the capital. They were considering a first-of-its-kind contract that would govern fire safety inspections at thousands of Bangladeshi factories making T-shirts, blazers, and other clothes Americans covet.

Under the terms of the agreement, each company would be required to publicly report fire hazards at factories, pay factory owners more to make repairs and provide at least \$500,000 over two years for the effort. They would also sign a legally binding agreement that would make them liable when there's a factory fire.

Discussions seemed promising. Then, on the second day, Sridevi Kalavakolanu, director of ethical sourcing for Wal-Mart Stores Inc., spoke up. "In most cases very extensive and costly modifications would need to be undertaken to some factories," Kalavakolanu was quoted as saying in the minutes of the meeting obtained by The Associated Press. "It is not financially feasible ... to make such investments."

The statement from the world's largest retailer, with \$447 billion in annual revenue, essentially sucked the air out of the room, witnesses said. It also set the tone for the rest of the meeting, which ended the next day without a single company agreeing to the plan.

"I think that really had quite an impact on ... everybody who was in the room," said Ineke Zeldenrust, who was at the meeting representing the workers' rights group Clean Clothes Campaign. "It was quite clear that we were very far from a solution."

As if to underline how much still needs to be done, even as executives nixed the proposal over tea in an air-conditioned room decorated with flowers, scores of scarred survivors and their relatives gathered outside the same building to await com-



In this Saturday, Dec. 8, 2012, photo, Bangladeshi garment workers manufacture clothing in a factory on the outskirts of Dhaka, Bangladesh. About a year before a November fire at a clothing factory in Bangladesh killed 112 people, executives from Wal-Mart, Gap and other big clothing companies met nearby in the country's capital to discuss a legally binding contract that would govern safety inspections. But after a spokeswoman for Wal-Mart, the world's largest retailer, got up and said the proposal wasn't "financially feasible," the effort quickly lost momentum.

pensation checks from another fatal factory collapse more than six years earlier.

The retailers' meeting and its aftermath highlighted a central issue for the \$1-trillion dollar global clothing industry: What role retailers play—and should play—in making working conditions safer at the factories that manufacture their apparel.

Retailers often claim they know little or nothing about conditions at factories, because the long and intricate manufacturing chain runs through several contractors and sub-contractors. Wal-Mart and others whose garments were found in the ruins of the fatal Tazreen Fashions Ltd. on Nov. 24 say they had severed ties with the factory or were unaware their clothes were being produced there.

Yet some industry experts and labor activists say it is those major retailers, and the customers who buy their clothes, who ultimately set the price for how much factories get paid, and how much they in turn pay their workers. Safety, they say, can take second place to profits.

The retail industry hasn't released estimates on how much it would cost to upgrade Bangladeshi factories to Western standards. But one advocacy group, The Worker Rights Consortium, puts the cost at about \$1.5 billion to \$3 billion over the next five years. That's about 3 percent of the \$95 billion expected to be spent on clothes manufacturing in the country during that time. It also amounts to about 10 cents added onto the cost of a T-shirt.

Building fires have led to more than 600 garment work deaths in Bangladesh since 2005, according to research by the advocacy group International Labor Rights Forum.

Major retailers such as Wal-Mart, Gap Inc. and Swedish clothing chain H&M have stepped up their own fire safety efforts, but they've stopped short of industry-wide standards that would hold them legally and financially accountable for fire hazards at factories.

Gap, which owns the Gap, Old Navy and Banana Republic chains, turned down the proposal because it did not want to be vulnerable to lawsuits, according to Bobbi Silten, senior vice president of global responsibility. The retailer also did not want to pay factories more money to help with safety upgrades, she said.

"It seemed very challenging to agree to," she said. "We don't own these factories and we're not the exclusive brands. It would be a different picture if we owned the factories."

Since then, Gap has hired its own chief fire inspector to oversee factories that produce Gap brands in Bangladesh. In addition to about \$1 million spent on safety measures in Bangladesh in the last two years, Gap has committed to another \$2 million to ensure that people laid off because of fire safety repairs are still paid. The San Francisco-based company has pledged to put factories in touch with financial institutions that can give them up to \$20 million in capital for safety improvements. The chain has also said it will share

anything it learns about safety issues in factories with the Bangladeshi and U.S. governments.

Silten acknowledged that such measures are not exhaustive.

"But we believe that in order to change (the system)," she said, "we need others to change."

Fashion chain H&M, which places the most apparel orders in Bangladesh, also did not sign on to the legally binding proposal because it believes factories and local government in Bangladesh should be taking on the responsibility, according to Pierre Börjesson, manager of sustainability and social issues, who attended the Dhaka meeting.

"We have the responsibility in Bangladesh to improve the situation, but this is through educating suppliers," he said.

H&M, which works with more than 200 factories in Bangladesh, is one of about 20 retailers and brands that have banded together to develop training films for suppliers. H&M has also started to do electrical assessments at the factories it does business with, an expense shared by the factories. It is pushing for suppliers to establish workers' committees to negotiate better wages and other issues with factory management, Börjesson said.

Wal-Mart, which ranks second in the number of apparel orders it places in Bangladesh, has also taken new steps. This year Wal-Mart is requiring regular audits of factories, fire drills and mandated fire safety training for all levels of factory manage-

ment. Spokesman Kevin Gardner said Wal-Mart's comments during the April 2011 meeting, which were jointly edited by Wal-Mart and Gap in the minutes obtained by the AP, were taken "out of context."

"Wal-Mart has been advocating for improved fire-safety with the Bangladeshi government, with industry groups and with suppliers," Gardner wrote in an email to the AP. "We firmly believe factory owners must meet our (supplier standards), and we recognize the cost of meeting those standards will be part of the cost of the goods we buy."

Auditors hired by Wal-Mart, based in Bentonville, Ark., inspected the Tazreen factory in 2011, giving it an "orange" or high-risk rating. Months later, the third-party auditor did a second inspection, giving it another "orange" rating. And early this year the factory was no longer authorized to produce merchandise for the retail giant. The company said a supplier—who has since been fired—had moved Wal-Mart production there without its knowledge.

But Prakash Sethi, a professor of management at City University of New York, is skeptical that Wal-Mart has so little power or knowledge when it comes to safety conditions at factories.

"How long will it take Wal-Mart to identify a factory if they were making shirts or shorts that were uneven, or where the sewing was below acceptable quality? Less than two days," he said. "They would immediately figure out which factory, where it's being made and put a stop to it. Why is it that they can't do it about the workers?"

Labor activists also doubt that the safety plans designed by retailers themselves will do the job.

"Voluntary codes of conduct are useless," said Charles Kernaghan, executive director of the Institute for Global Labour and Human Rights, who is best known for exposing the use of Honduran child labor to produce clothing for celebrity Kathie Lee Gifford's line in the mid-1990s. "The monitoring is completely phony."

In many ways, it is strong demand that has driven the problem in Bangladesh. Companies in developed nations like the U.S. move production from country to country in search of the lowest costs and least worker strife. Bangladesh is now second behind only China among the world's largest exporters of apparel, with a \$20 billion-a-year garment industry.

Cheap labor, unlike materials, transportation and taxes, is

one of the few costs retailers and brands can control. And factories in Bangladesh know they can get lucrative deals with retailers and designers by shaving pennies off the cost of making a T-shirt, so they often cut corners.

Bangladesh has the cheapest labor by far. The average garment worker in Bangladesh earns the equivalent of 24 cents an hour, compared with \$1.26 an hour in China, 53 cents an hour in Vietnam and 34 cents an hour in Cambodia, according to The Worker Rights Consortium.

Yet growing competition to offer up-to-the-minute fashions at low prices in the weak global economy has led retailers and designers to demand even lower costs from factories. A few years ago, companies shipped new merchandise to stores every two to three months; now, the goal is a fresh supply each month. They are also asking factories to make last-minute changes to orders more often - add a button here or a belt there.

Factory owners can agree, or lose the order, sometimes to new factories that spring up overnight.

"Factory owners, in a certain sense, they're in a bind," says Robert Ross, author of "Slaves to Fashion: Poverty and Abuse in the New Sweatshop" and a sociologist at Clark University. "They're forced to be ruthless and brutal—and they are."

A year after the retailers' meeting in Dhaka to discuss the safety proposal, only two companies have signed the resulting joint memorandum of understanding.

Phillips Van-Heusen Corp., a New York City-based company that sells the Calvin Klein and Tommy Hilfiger brands, in March signed the legally binding agreement after a national TV news report that chronicled the dangerous conditions in one of its Bangladesh factories. The company agreed to underwrite a two-year, \$1 million program that allows independent fire-safety inspections and public reports of findings. But PVH, which did not return repeated calls seeking comment for this article, pledged to start the program only if at least three other major retailers sign on.

So far, only one has: A German coffee chain named Tchibo that also sells clothes.

Last week, Nanda Bernstein, the chain's head of vendor relations, said on a post on the company's website that measures by individual companies were not enough, and a sector-wide initiative was needed. Her quote: "As soon as two more companies join, it will come into force."



# Environment

## Faux or fresh? Make your Christmas tree stand out

By KATHY VAN MULLEKOM  
DAILY PRESS (NEWPORT NEWS, VA.)

Whether you are a fresh-cut or faux Christmas tree household, there are plenty of options for decorating your home with the biggest, brightest and best.

For the nostalgic who think Christmas is only Christmas when there's a good-smelling real tree dropping needles all over the floor, you'll be happy to know there are many good options, according to the National Christmas Tree Association—[www.realchristmastree.org](http://www.realchristmastree.org).

The Scotch pine is the most common Christmas tree with 1-inch-long needles that don't drop, even under the driest of home conditions. White pine is the largest of its kind, but its soft needles aren't good for heavy ornaments. White spruce is ideal for ornaments because its stiff branches display them so nicely.

For a good smell and excellent form, you may want to hunt for Fraser fir, a dark blue-green tree with sturdy, evenly placed branches that are ideal for displaying lights and ornaments. They grow best in the higher elevations of mountains where

the colder weather enhances their vigor and shape.

### NO-MESS TREES

Faux fans will like some of the newest trends in artificial trees, including the 100 percent PVC-free Williamsburg Pine, available for \$450 and up from Christmas Tree for Me at [www.ChristmasTreeForMe.com](http://www.ChristmasTreeForMe.com). The tree is in response to environmentally conscious customers who want to eliminate PVC from their homes because they are parents or have family

members who have adverse reactions to chemicals contained in PVC, according to founder Bill Quinn.

"The branches on most

modern artificial Christmas trees are a mixture of PE (polyethylene) and PVC (polyvinyl chloride)," he says. "In addition, the center pole is wrapped with a thin PVC wrap to help the center pole blend with branches."

"The branches on the Williamsburg use PE branches exclusively, while the center pole is covered with natural wood pulp instead of a PVC."

In general, tree technology has advanced tremendously, especially in the past five years, according to Brad Whited, senior merchant at Home Depot.

"We launched EcoSmart LED lighting, which features exclusive new technology of fully water-resistant strings, replaceable and super bright bulbs, continuous-on lights (meaning if one breaks or comes loose the rest stay lit), and warm white bulbs," he says.

"Many of these varieties feature low voltage LEDs that are safer for use inside the home and EZ Shape branches that require less effort to shape during setup."

Home Depot also offers more slim tree options, such as the Wesley Pencil Pine Artificial Christmas Tree, that feature a tall thin design that can be displayed in any narrow corner or used as an accent along a walkway or stairway. The Wesley tree line also features a "quick set" option that has an integrated connection built into the center



The Williamsburg Pine is made to be PVC free and realistic looking.  
CHRISTMASTREEFORME.COM/MCT

pole to create an instant electrical connection as you put the tree together.

"No more hassling each year to try and figure out which plug goes into which socket," says Whited. "Just connect the pole

### 5 FRESH-CUT TREE TIPS

- **Size it right.** Know what tree size—height and width—you can use before heading to buy or cut one—trees look smaller outdoors but bigger indoors.
- **Test its freshness.** Run a branch through your enclosed hand; needles should not come off easily. Bend the outer branches, which should be pliable; if they are brittle and snap easily, the tree is too dry.
- **Prep it properly.** Refresh the tree by making a straight cut, taking 1 inch off the butt and immediately place it in water to improve its water uptake. It can stay in a bucket full of water several days before going indoors.
- **Display it safely.** Use a sturdy stand, one designed for your tree's size and water needs; fill the stand daily with tepid fresh water. Keep decorated trees away from sources of heat—fireplaces, heaters, heat vents, direct sunlight.
- **Dispose of it properly.** Never burn any part of a Christmas tree in a wood stove or fireplace. After Christmas, place your undecorated tree curbside for city or county pickup. You can also place it outdoors and decorate it with treats for the birds.

and the lights come on."

Prices for this new innovation include \$39.97 for the EcoSmart lights, \$299 for EZ Shape trees and \$99-\$149 for the Wesley trees.

If you like your Christmas tree to entertain you with music while you gaze at all its glitter, you need Lowe's "One Plug Dancing Tree," a 7½ footer

that shapes itself and plugs into your MP3 player for an LED light display that syncs to your favorite holiday tunes. Cost for that personalized concert is \$349.

And, if you can't decide between a fresh-cut or faux tree, there is a good option at Home Depot. The new GE LED prelit Nordic pine comes with easy-shape branches that are variegated to look like the real thing. Its LED lights glow with the same soft, warm look as older incandescent lights while still saving you energy-bill money to offset its \$299 cost.

### DO YOUR PART

## Do you have a trashy kitchen?

By TERRI BENNETT  
MCT INFORMATION SERVICES

The kitchen may be the heart of the home but it's also the biggest trash generator in your house—especially this time of year. In fact, each person in your home creates about four pounds of trash a day and most of it comes from the kitchen. A few simple solutions will make all the difference when it comes to creating less waste. I'll show you how to Do Your Part to trash less and save money at the same time.

Let's start with what you bring into the kitchen. Reusable bags are a must. Get yourself a bunch of different sizes and you're set for any shopping trip. But, you also need to think about waste as you shop. Anything packaged in single sized servings flat out costs more so opt for buying in bulk when you can. You can make your own individual portions by using small, reusable containers. Also, buy items that come in easy to recycle packaging that you can toss into the recycling bin when you're done.

Now, the absolute biggest source of trash is food. It's astonishing to think that 30 percent of the food we buy, we throw away. The easiest thing

to do is to save those leftovers. Keeping them for a snack or lunch, freezing larger portions, or using them in a different recipe is the way to go. Visit [www.doyourpart.com/columns](http://www.doyourpart.com/columns) for specific information on how to waste less food and preserve foods throughout the year. Finally, don't forget that composting unwanted leftovers will create free fertilizer for your lawn and garden.

Then, there are the one-use items that get trashed. Save money by using reusable clothes and rags instead of pricey paper towels. Choose cloth napkins instead of paper ones. And, put an end to disposable plastic water bottles and invest in a few reusable ones. These days, there are even reusable silicon covers that are an excellent alternative to one-use plastic wrap or aluminum foil.

Adding a few simple changes to your kitchen routine will help you Do Your Part to create less trash and keep more money in your pocket.

*Terri Bennett is a veteran TV meteorologist, eco-expert and author of Do Your Part: A practical guide for everyday green living available at DoYourPart.com. Send questions to [terri@doyourpart.com](mailto:terri@doyourpart.com).*

Lowe's new musical, pre-lit pine tree features a one-plug option that helps you play iPod music.  
LOWE'S/MCT



HOME DEPOT/MCT

Home Depot's new GE Nordic pine has variegated branches for a more natural looking tree and LED lights that glow softly, casting a romantic holiday look in any decor.



## Life & Style

# There arose such a clatter over pipe-free Santa

**NEW YORK (AP)**—Santa has kicked the habit in time for Christmas. No, not the sugar plum habit, or his fur-wearing habit, or his penchant for romping recklessly around open flame.

No, gentlepeople, this is the year the man in red gave up pipe tobacco, at least in a new book version of "Twas the Night Before Christmas" that has received attention from some lofty corners, including the American Library Association and the American Academy of Pediatrics.

The self-published Pamela McColl of Vancouver, Canada, has a mission for her story, to protect children and their parents from the ravages of smoking. She mortgaged her house and sunk \$200,000 into her telling of the 189-year-old holiday poem, touring the states to promote it ahead of its September release.

What, particularly, did McColl do? She excised these lines: "The stump of a pipe he held tight in his teeth. And the smoke it encircled his head like a wreath." And she added to the cover: "Edited by Santa Claus for the benefit of children of the 21st century."

And she included a letter from Santa on the back jacket flap announcing that "all of that old tired business of smoking" is behind him, claiming (by the

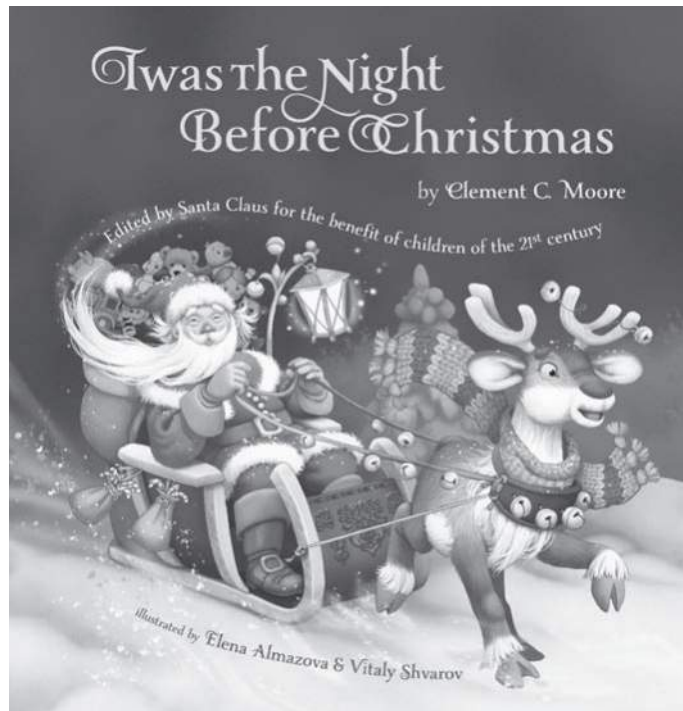
way) that the reindeer can confirm his fur outerwear is faux out of respect for animals, including the polar bears of his beloved North Pole.

"There is a huge debate raging," McColl said of the attention. "I have been called every name in the book. One person said the only wreath they want to see this Christmas is one on my grave. Shame, shame, shame on you is the most common."

The 54-year-old entrepreneur and mother of adult twins said she's on Santa's case about smoking because she has seen firsthand how harmful it can be, recalling how at age 18 she had to pull her own father out of his burning bed after he fell asleep with a lit cigarette. She smoked herself as a teen but quit and is thankful her kids never took up the habit.

Deborah Caldwell-Stone, the ALA's deputy director for intellectual freedom, doesn't have a hard heart. But she doesn't see tobacco addiction when she considers what McColl has done. She sees "Adventures of Huckleberry Finn" and "Tom Sawyer."

A publisher put out a combined version of those classics last year as edited by Mark Twain scholar Alan Gribben, who replaced about 200 occurrences of the N-word with "slave." Of McColl, Caldwell-Stone said:



This book cover image released by Grafton and Scratch Publishers shows "Twas the Night Before Christmas," by Clement C. Moore. This new version of "Twas the Night Before Christmas" has eliminated all references to a smoking Santa.

"This wasn't a retelling. This wasn't a parody. This wasn't an adaptation. This wasn't a modernization. This wasn't fanfic. This was presenting the original but censoring the content. That kind of expurgation that seeks to prevent others from knowing the original work because of a disapproval of the ideas, the content, is

a kind of censorship that we've always disapproved of."

Caldwell-Stone said as much in a statement the ALA publicly released. She said the two cases involve the "altering of a classic work of literature with a view toward protecting modern sensibilities, or preventing children from being aware of the charac-

ter of the original work."

Stephen Colbert had some thoughts on the matter in November, only he was louder and funnier.

"Santa can't quit smoking," he bellowed on his Comedy Central show, holding back a laugh. "He needs that vice. You try dealing with the stress of delivering the world's toys in a single night. We're lucky he's not doing a p a r u m p u m p u m of coke off of Blitzen's ass."

McColl said she's trying to offer one option among dozens of versions of the rhyme that helped launch Santa Claus as an icon. She wants to shake up complacency over tobacco addiction and believes the pipe and rings of smoke around his head do resonate with little kids who don't have the same Santa filters as the rest of us, especially those who have parents or other loved ones who smoke.

"To them, Santa's not some historical guy," McColl said from Portland, Ore., where she recently finished nearly a full year on the road. "He's a real character. He's a real person coming down the chimney, and he's smoking. That's what a 3-year-old thinks like."

McColl said she ran into supporters during her travels, including children who fret about

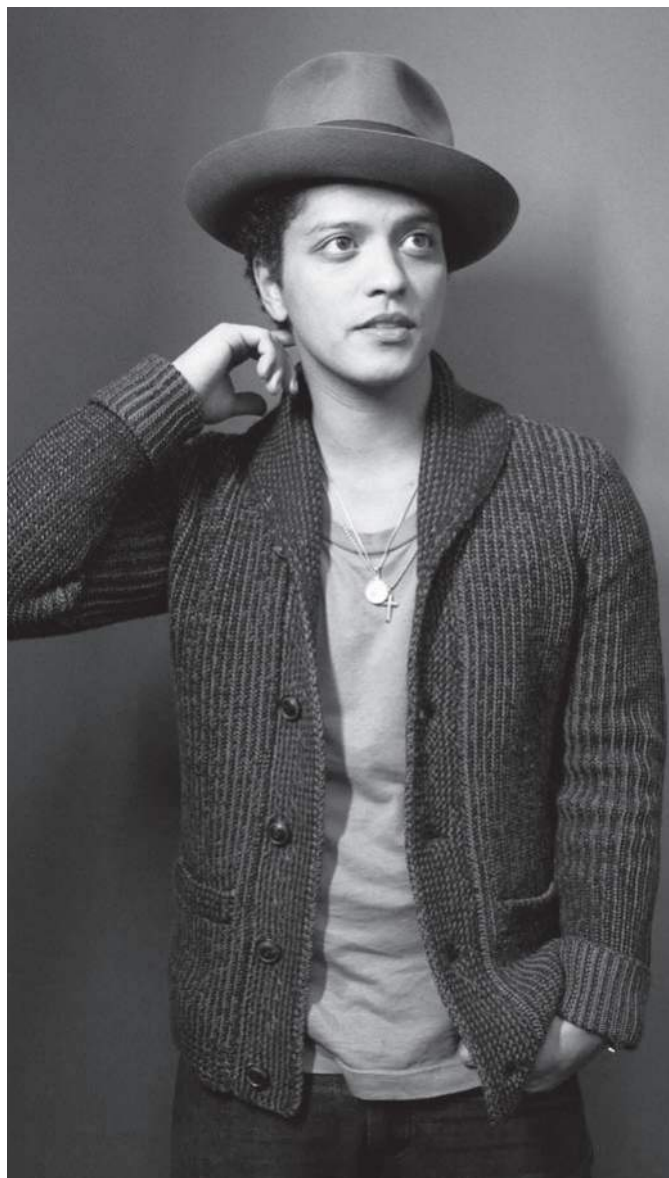
Santa's health. Smoking, she said, is something Clement C. Moore, a churchgoing academic, also wasn't fond of. He once called tobacco "opium's treacherous, villainous friend."

A Troy, N.Y., newspaper published the poem anonymously in 1823 as "A Visit from St. Nicholas." Moore, who lived in Manhattan with his wife and six children, claimed the work in 1844, though some historians think Henry Livingston Jr. was the true creator.

Moore presented the New York Historical Society, of which he was a member, with a handwritten manuscript of the poem and it resides there today, along with a boxful of about 20 book versions of the work that now includes no-smoking Santa, donated by McColl.

"I think it reflects the times, so we were amused by it," said Mariam Touba, the society's reference librarian.

Among the courtesy stops for McColl during her walk-about promoting the book was a visit in October to the American Academy of Pediatrics in Chicago. The group of about 60,000 doctors said the book "was not reviewed or considered by our leadership in any official way," but McColl insists that "Public health loves this book."



This Nov. 5, 2012 file photo shows American singer-songwriter Bruno Mars posing for a portrait in New York.

## Bruno Mars pushes ahead with sophomore album

By MESFIN FEKADU  
AP MUSIC WRITER



**NEW YORK (AP)**—Bruno Mars was jealous of Amy Winehouse because he wanted to do what she did: release genre-bending songs that connected with audiences around the world.

"I felt like everything I've been saying, everything I wanted to do, she did it. It was one of those things like, 'Damn it! Damn it!' It was perfect," the singer-songwriter-producer said in a recent interview.

Winehouse, who died last year, won five Grammy Awards for 2007's "Back to Black," including album of the year.

"You couldn't put it in a box 'cause it could be played on rock stations, it could be played on rhythmic stations, it could be played on pop radio, and I've always wanted to make music like that—that could be spread out, and can't be pigeon-held to one thing," he said. "And they did it. Her and Mark Ronson."

Mars was signed to Universal Motown when he grew envious of Winehouse, who released "Back to Black" on Motown's sister label, Universal Republic. Though his

record deal fell through, the crooner had a breakthrough in 2010 on Atlantic Records with his multisounding, near-double platinum debut, "Doo-Wop & Hooligans." And this week he's releasing an album full of even more sounds with "Unorthodox Jukebox." It features Ronson, who has produced for Lily Allen, Adele, Nas and Q-Tip.

"(I was) not thinking about business or radio or politics, just doing what I love to do and that's creating music," Mars said. "Whether it be a reggae song, rock song, a love song, the main thing was just to, whatever I was feeling, to try to capture that emotion."

The 27-year-old talked about his sophomore album, which includes production collaborations with Jeff Bhasker, Diplo, Paul Epworth, Emile Haynie and the Smeezingtons, the production trio that includes Mars, Philip Lawrence and Ari Levine.

**The Associated Press: You and the Smeezingtons wrote your entire debut album. Why did you decide to reach out to other writers and producers on your new album?**

**Mars:** Why not? That's when the fun comes in. Now, it's time to have some fun. Let's put the dream band together. ... I love their take on pop music. ... It

was a big ole science project.

**AP: Did you listen to the radio while recording the album?**

**Mars:** No, not because I didn't want to listen to the radio, it's more because I generally, literally locked myself in the studio. Like, we were in the studio. In the dark. No windows. Nothing. Like, it got bad. Beard down to here (points to floor). Everyone smelled like cabbage.

**AP: What's it like putting out an album following the success of "Doo-Wop & Hooligans"?**

**Mars:** Well, I feel like you have to constantly keep proving yourself, and you have to constantly keep getting out there and showing them you're more than just that one song on the radio that's just playing. And that's what I had to do the first time around; I had to keep going out there and keep performing live.

**AP: Lyrically, what made you write the song "Young Girls"?**

**Mars:** On that song I remember feeling like an old blues man, and I wanted to talk about the young girls that are just giving me the runaround, and basically it's kind of the sentiment like you're looking for love in all the wrong places. It's very easy to do and I'm sure a lot of peo-

ple have done it. You know, you go out every night and you're drinking and you're having a good time. There's a moment when you get lost; you get lost in the sauce! And you know, reality sets in and basically ... you can't be looking for love ... in nightclubs and being intoxicated.

**AP: Your parents are also musicians. What do they think of your music?**

**Mars:** They've been my biggest support, my mom and dad. No one believed in me more than they did. And I'm talking about some things on this album that are not the most comfortable to play for your mother (laughs). But she knows. She understands and I talk to her and I tell her if I don't write what comes to me then I become a cartoon. And she understands it and supports me 100 percent.

**AP: Will you collaborate musically with them?**

**Mars:** We are the world. Just me and mom and pops, my cousins in there. I mean, I'd like to. You know my sister sings, my brother plays drums in my band. My whole family is a bunch of musicians. So, when the right time comes, you'll see it on some kind of reunion tour, CBS special, 'Behind the Music: Bruno's Family,' trying to revive my career.



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Friday, Dec. 7<sup>th</sup> through Thursday, Dec. 13<sup>th</sup>, 2012  
OPEN SEVEN DAYS A WEEK

## ★ NOW SHOWING ★



### Playing for Keeps

Friday		4:20	7:20	9:40
Saturday	1:20	4:20	7:20	9:40
Sunday	1:20	4:20	7:20	
Monday thru Thursday			7:20	

Cast: Gerard Butler, Jessica Biel, Dennis Quaid  
Genre: Comedy • Rated PG 13

### Synopsis

Gerard Butler, Jessica Biel, Uma Thurman, Catherine Zeta-Jones and Dennis Quaid star in "Playing for Keeps," a romantic comedy about a charming, down-on-his luck former soccer star (Butler) who returns home to put his life back together. Looking for a way to rebuild his relationship with his son, he gets roped into coaching the boy's soccer team.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★



### Rise of the Guardians 3D

Friday		7:30	9:45
Saturday	1:30	7:30	9:45
Sunday	1:30	7:30	
Monday thru Thursday		7:30	

Cast: Chris Pine, Hugh Jackman, Alec Baldwin  
Genre: Children's/family • Rated PG



### Life of Pi 3D

Friday		7:05	9:50
Saturday	1:05	7:05	9:50
Sunday	1:05	7:05	
Monday thru Thursday		7:05	

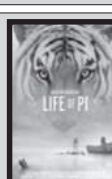
Cast: Suraj Sharma, Irfan Khan, Tabu, Rafe Spall  
Genre: Drama, Adventure • Rated PG



### Red Dawn

Friday		4:25	7:25	9:35
Saturday	1:25	4:25	7:25	9:35
Sunday	1:25	4:25	7:25	
Monday thru Thursday		4:25	7:25	

Cast: Chris Hemsworth, Josh Peck, Josh Hutcherson  
Genre: Action • Rated PG13



### Life of Pi 2D

Friday		4:05	
Saturday		4:05	
Sunday		4:05	
Monday thru Thursday		4:05	

Cast: Suraj Sharma, Irfan Khan, Tabu, Rafe Spall  
Genre: Drama, Adventure • Rated PG



### Rise of the Guardians 2D

Friday		4:30	
Saturday		4:30	
Sunday		4:30	
Monday thru Thursday		4:30	

Cast: Chris Pine, Hugh Jackman, Alec Baldwin  
Genre: Children's/family • Rated PG



### Twilight: Breaking Dawn Part 2

Friday		4:00	7:00	9:30
Saturday	1:00	4:00	7:00	9:30
Sunday	1:00	4:00	7:00	
Monday thru Thursday		4:00	7:00	

Cast: Kristen Stewart, Robert Pattinson, Taylor Lautner  
Genre: Fantasy • Rated PG13



### Flight

Friday		4:10	7:10	9:55
Saturday	1:10	4:10	7:10	9:55
Sunday	1:10	4:10	7:10	
Monday thru Thursday		4:10	7:10	

Cast: Denzel Washington, Don Cheadle, Kelly Reilly  
Genre: Drama • Rated R



### Skyfall

Friday		4:15	7:15	10:00
Saturday	1:15	4:15	7:15	10:00
Sunday	1:15	4:15	7:15	
Monday thru Thursday		4:15	7:15	

Cast: Daniel Craig, Judi Dench, Javier Bardem  
Genre: Spy film, Action • Rated PG13

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# Actress Parker hails EU as example for US

OSLO, Norway (AP)—American actress Sarah Jessica Parker praised the EU on Tuesday for winning the Nobel Peace Prize for pacifying Europe and uniting its different cultures after World War II, and she said the bloc should serve as an example to the United States, given the divisions its recent elections have brought to the surface.

Parker said that while it might be controversial to have awarded the 27-nation EU the prestigious award as it struggles with a financial crisis that is causing hardship to many, it is "a terrific blueprint for us," and one the U.S. should learn from.

"I don't know how we can't," she said in an interview before the Nobel Concert she is hosting with Scottish actor Gerard Butler. "It is also a story that we are trying to tell in our country. We are trying to say to one another: We are different. We are a divided nation, but our goals in many ways are the same.

"We have had two elections that have been really painful for our country."

Not everyone approved the decision to give the prize to the EU, which was created 60 years



U.S. actress Sarah Jessica Parker gestures, as she has an interview with the Associated Press ahead of hosting the Nobel Peace Prize Concert in Oslo, Norway, Tuesday Dec. 11, 2012.

ago as Europe was struggling to recover from a war that killed millions of people. Three Peace Prize laureates—South African Archbishop Desmond Tutu, Mairead Maguire of Northern

Ireland and Adolfo Perez Esquivel from Argentina—said the bloc should not receive the \$1.2 million in Peace Prize money because it relies on military force to ensure security.

## Lawsuit claims TV's 'Storage Wars' show is rigged

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Some of the valuables found hidden in abandoned lockers on A&E's "Storage Wars" have been added by producers to deceive viewers, a former cast member of the show claims in a lawsuit filed Tuesday.

David Hester's suit claims producers have added a BMW Mini and newspapers chronicling Elvis Presley's death to lockers in order to build drama for the show and that his complaints about the practices led to his firing.

Hester is seeking more than \$750,000 in his wrongful termination, breach of contract and unfair business practices lawsuit. A&E Television Network declined comment, citing the

pending lawsuit.

"Storage Wars" follows buyers who bid for abandoned storage lockers hoping to find valuables tucked inside.

"A&E regularly plants valuable items or memorabilia," the lawsuit states. Hester's suit claims he was fired from participating in the series' fourth season after expressing concerns that manipulating the storage lockers for the sake of the show was illegal.

He claims that producers stopped adding items to his units after his initial complaints but continued the practice for other series participants. The lawsuit alleges entire units have been staged and the practice may

violate a federal law intended to prevent viewers from being deceived when watching a show involving intellectual skills.

"Storage Wars" depicts buyers having only a few moments to look into an abandoned unit before deciding on whether to bid on it at auction. The lawsuit claims some of the auction footage on the show is staged.

Hester, known as "The Mogul" on the show, has been buying abandoned storage units and re-selling their contents for 26 years, according to the suit.

Nielsen Co. has ranked "Storage Wars" among cable television's top-ranked shows several times since its 2010 debut.

## 'Flight,' 'Django Unchained' among NAACP nominees

LOS ANGELES (AP)—"Flight," "Django Unchained," "Beasts of the Southern Wild," "Red Tails" and "Tyler Perry's Good Deeds" are up for the outstanding motion picture trophy at the NAACP Image Awards.

The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People announced the nominations Tuesday for the awards that honor diversity in the arts. The 44th annual ceremony is scheduled to air Feb. 1 on NBC.

Other nominees included outstanding actor in a motion picture contenders Denzel Washington for "Flight," Jamie Foxx for "Django Unchained," Morgan Freeman for "The Magic of Belle Isle," Suraj Sharma for "Life of Pi" and Tyler Perry for "Alex Cross."

The outstanding actress nominees are Emayatzy Corinealdi for "Middle of Nowhere," Halle Berry for "Cloud Atlas," Lo-

retta Devine for "In the Hive," Quvenzhane Wallis for "Beasts of the Southern Wild" and Viola Davis for "Won't Back Down."

In the outstanding supporting actor category, David Oyelowo was nominated for "Middle of Nowhere," Don Cheadle for "Flight," Dwight Henry for "Beasts of the Southern Wild," Lenny Kravitz for "The Hunger Games" and Samuel L. Jackson for "Django Unchained."

The nominees for outstanding supporting actress are Amanda Stenberg for "The Hunger Games," Gloria Reuben for "Lincoln," Kerry Washington for "Django Unchained," Phylicia Rashad for "Tyler Perry's Good Deeds" and Taraji P. Henson for "Think Like a Man."

On the television side, "Glee," "Modern Family," "The Game," "The Mindy Project" and "The Soul Man" were nominated for outstanding comedy series, while

"Boardwalk Empire," "Grey's Anatomy," "Scandal," "Treme" and "True Blood" nabbed dramatic series nominations.

Outstanding comedy series actor nominees are Cheadle for "House of Lies," Anthony Anderson for "Guys With Kids," Damon Wayans Jr. for "Happy Endings," Donald Faison for "The Exes" and Hosea Chan-chez for "The Game."

Outstanding comedy series actress nominees are Amber Riley for "Glee," Cassi Davis for "Tyler Perry's House of Payne," Kellita Smith for "The First Family," Tatyana Ali for "Love That Girl" and Wendy Raquel Robinson for "The Game."

Nominations for outstanding actor in a drama series went to Dule Hill for "Psych," Hill Harper for "CSI: NY," LL Cool J for "NCIS: Los Angeles," Michael Clarke Duncan for "The Finder" and Wendell Pierce for "Treme."

Parker, known from the television comedy-drama "Sex and the City," said her parents were peace activists and she remembers attending anti-war rallies at an early age. She said visiting Oslo held a special significance for her since she wanted to see the table around which the decisions are made on awarding the Peace Prize.

Parker said that the EU had helped solve "incredibly complicated old problems and if they can find a way to be a community ... that is an ideal. It is what I want for us."

Butler, who worked as a lawyer before becoming an actor, said he lived much of his early life in Scotland, "which has had a very tragic history fighting against England for thousands of years."

"Now we live in a time when this isn't happening, and I think as a Scotsman, as a European, it makes me very proud to be part of this process," he said.

The evening's artists, performing at Oslo's Spektrum Hall, include U.S. singer Jennifer Hudson, Australian pop star Kylie Minogue, American R&B artist Ne-Yo, and British soul singer Seal.

## Spice Girls musical 'Viva Forever' opens in London

LONDON (AP)—"Viva Forever"? Time will tell.

Girl Power lit up London's West End on Tuesday at the premiere of the new Spice Girls musical—but audiences and critics will decide whether it has the energy to become a hit.

The five members of the 1990s girl group, who all attended the show, were confident as they took the stage alongside the cast for a curtain call at London's Piccadilly Theatre.

"It was ... great," said Melanie Brown, also known as brassy band member Scary Spice. She inserted an emphatic expletive before "great."

Added band mate Geri "Ginger Spice" Halliwell: "That's why we're the Spice Girls."

For a few hours Tuesday, it was as if the 1990s were back, as the Spice Girls and their fans attended the show, a tale of female friendship and mother-daughter bonds set to songs including "Wannabe," "Spice Up Your Life" and the title track.

The show, written by comedian Jennifer Saunders, takes the Girl Power theme that made the band a pop sensation and updates it to a modern-day world of Twitter and TV talent shows.

It got a standing ovation, but not everyone was impressed. Mark Shenton, a critic for The Stage newspaper, tweeted that it was "a phony, manufactured musical"—and not even funny.

The Independent newspaper's theater critic Paul Taylor gave the show two stars out of five, calling it "lacking in any truly original or challenging spark."



# Ricky Martin wishes he could come out again

**UNITED NATIONS (AP)**—Latin superstar Ricky Martin is telling a U.N. conference on homophobia that he wishes he could come out again so he could tell people struggling with their identities that “it’s just beautiful—you find love.”

Martin said Tuesday that “for many years, I lived in fear ... because I was hating myself because I grew up listening to a very crooked concept: ‘You’re gay. You belong in hell.’”

Martin, who is currently starring on Broadway in “Evita,” said it was amazing to be at the United Nations surrounded by people “fighting for one cause—equality and love and social justice.”

He praised U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon who got a standing ovation after telling

the conference that lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people—the LGBTs—are entitled to the same rights as everyone else.”

“They, too, are born free and equal,” Ban said. “I stand shoulder-to-shoulder with them in their struggle for human rights.”

The secretary-general said he is “pained” that more than 76 countries still criminalize homosexuality.

“I am here to again denounce violence and demand action for true equality,” he said.

While the past decade has seen far-reaching reforms in Europe, the Americas and a number of African and Asian countries, Ban said, in a number of countries—including Ukraine—draft laws have been proposed that would



AP  
In this Monday, March 12, 2012 photo, Ricky Martin appears at the curtain call after his first performance in the new Broadway production of “Evita”, in New York.

criminalize public discussion of homosexuality.

South African singing star Yvonne Chaka Chaka, a human rights activist and goodwill ambassador for the U.N. children’s fund who is married and has four children, said “I think straight people should respect other people because, for me, I don’t think there’s anything crooked about LGBT.”

Their only “crime,” she said, “is because they love the same gender.”

Chaka said her husband is a prince who is allowed to have three or four wives “but I would not let him.”

I will never allow him to have a second wife, and he knows that. That is why he chose me,” she said. “If he wants to, goodbye.”

## Shia LaBeouf to make Broadway debut this spring

**NEW YORK (AP)**—Shia LaBeouf is about to transform—into a Broadway actor.

The ex-star of the “Transformers” franchise will make his Broadway debut opposite Alec Baldwin in Lyle Kessler’s “Orphans” at the Schoenfeld Theatre starting March 19. Daniel Sullivan will direct.

The play, which premiered in 1983, tells the story of two orphaned brothers living in a decrepit Philadelphia row house who decide to kidnap a wealthy man. LaBeouf plays one brother and Baldwin the target.

LaBeouf, whose films include “Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull” and “Wall Street: Money Never Sleeps,” was most recently seen in John Hillcoat’s crime drama “Lawless.”

He will next be in Robert Redford’s “The Company You Keep” and in “The Necessary Death of Charlie Countryman” opposite Evan Rachel Wood.



LaBeouf

## ‘Lincoln’ leads Critics’ Choice Awards nominees

**LOS ANGELES (AP)**—Film critics love “Lincoln.” The historical drama earned a record-breaking 13 nominations for the Critics’ Choice Movie Awards.

The Broadcast Film Critics Association announced the nominees for its 18th annual awards ceremony Tuesday in Los Angeles.

“Lincoln” beat the 12 nods earned by 2010’s “Black Swan” with bids for director Steven Spielberg, star Daniel Day-Lewis and supporting actors Sally Field and Tommy Lee Jones, as well as cinematography, adapted screenplay, costume design, makeup, editing, art direction, score and acting ensemble.

“Les Miserables” follows with 11 nominations and “Silver Linings Playbook” has 10. “Life of Pi” earned nine nods. “Argo,” “Skyfall” and “The Master” each have seven.

Winners will be announced Jan. 10, 2013, at a ceremony set to be broadcast live on the CW network.

## LA prosecutors seeking to revoke Lohan’s probation

**LOS ANGELES (AP)**—Los Angeles prosecutors on Tuesday asked a judge to revoke Lindsay Lohan’s probation and schedule a hearing that could lead to the actress’ return to jail.

The filing came one day before Lohan is scheduled to be arraigned Wednesday on three misdemeanor charges filed last month related to a June car crash.

Lohan will not need to be present for Wednesday’s arraignment on charges she lied to Santa Monica police, was driving recklessly and obstructed an officer from performing duties related to the crash investigation. She remains on probation for a 2011 necklace theft case and could be sentenced to 245 days in jail if a judge determines her conduct was a probation violation.

Her attorney Shawn Holley did not immediately return an email seeking comment.

City attorney’s spokesman Frank Mateljan said any proba-



AP  
In this Oct. 11, 2012 file photo, Lindsay Lohan attends the Mr. Pink Gin-seng launch party at the Beverly Wilshire hotel in Beverly Hills, Calif.

tion violation proceedings are likely to be heard after the Santa Monica case. Prosecutors allege Lohan lied about being a passenger in her Porsche when it crashed on Pacific Coast Highway on the way to a film shoot.

The “Liz and Dick” star was

released from supervised probation in March after completing several months of court appearances and morgue cleanup duty.

Lohan has yet to be booked on the new charges and a judge on Wednesday will likely set bail and the terms of her release.

was revealed in “The Mystery of a Small Pond,” published Tuesday amid great fanfare. The pope’s private secretary, Monsignor Georg Gaenswein, the heads of the Vatican Museums and Vatican publishing house, the author, and the caretaker of the pontifical villa spoke at the launch. Gaenswein says the book reveals the “mystery” of Benedict, “who we all know is a great theologian with a powerful mind, but who has a very, very sensitive soul.”

## Pope’s sensitive side revealed in children’s book

**VATICAN CITY (AP)**—A children’s picture book about the goldfish pond at the pope’s summer residence reveals a side of him few may know. Every day while Pope Benedict XVI is on vacation at Castel Gandolfo south of Rome, he feeds the goldfish after praying by a nearby statue of Mary, tossing them pieces of bread. The little-known factoid

## Dental school would welcome tooth fairy’s treasure trove

By **ABIGAIL VAN BUREN**  
FROM UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

**DEAR ABBY:** I must respond to “Always His Mom” (Sept. 26), who asked what to do with her grown son’s baby teeth. She can contact the college of dentistry close to her and ask if the school would like to have the baby teeth the Tooth Fairy collected.



When I was in dental school, we used deciduous teeth (baby teeth) to study the dental anatomy of children. It’s rare to have a complete set from one person, which would make these a good learning aid for students. When I was in school, the deciduous teeth were nearly smooth because of the number of students who had handled them, making them very difficult to identify.

DOUG FROM SOLON, IOWA

**DEAR DOUG:** Your suggestion to contact a dental school and ask if they would be interested in using the baby teeth as learning aids is sensible. Other readers offered some “unique” ideas on the subject:

■ ■ ■ ■

**DEAR ABBY:** I’d like to comment about what to do with those baby teeth. The original reasoning behind the tooth under the pillow custom was to keep witches from getting ahold of them and casting a spell on the child. The traditional disposition of those teeth was straight into the fire!

LADAWN IN WISCONSIN

■ ■ ■ ■

**DEAR ABBY:** I had a neighbor with five children. She also kept their baby teeth and was inspired to use them to make a present for her father. At the time, we were into casting things in plastic, so she bought a mold for a toilet seat and embedded all the teeth neatly into it. Her father refused to use it because he said it would be like sitting in a shark’s mouth.

CAROLE IN GILFORD, N.H.

■ ■ ■ ■

**DEAR ABBY:** My son passed away. His girlfriend was pregnant and had the baby four months later. We had a DNA test done using his baby teeth, which I had saved. It proved he was the father, and the baby, our grandson, is now 10 years old.

Also, with this information, the boy was able to get Social Security benefits for survivors. It was a bit of a struggle, but well worth it. How’s that for a good use for baby teeth?

GRANDMA IN NEWBURGH, N.Y.

■ ■ ■ ■

**DEAR ABBY:** As I was cleaning out my father’s dresser, I found an envelope with a drawing that I had done in kindergarten and another envelope containing a tooth and a note to the Tooth Fairy written in my childish hand.

Imagine how touched I was when I found it—knowing he had kept these things for nearly a half a century. I think putting the teeth in an envelope for “Always” son to find later on would be a lovely thing to do.

SISSY IN LAUSANNE, SWITZERLAND

■ ■ ■ ■

**DEAR ABBY:** My favorite Tooth Fairy memory is when my 6-year-old daughter asked if she would hear the “Tooth Fairy’s wings flapping” when she came to collect the tooth that had been placed under her pillow. Kids do say the darnedest things, and yes, I still have her teeth and the notes she wrote to the Tooth Fairy.

KARIE’S MOM IN ENCINO, CALIF.

■ ■ ■ ■

**DEAR ABBY:** When my daughter did a science fair project on tooth decay, I let her have the jar of saved teeth for her experiments. She did a thorough research job and a beautiful presentation, earning a blue ribbon.

JANICE IN ROCHESTER, WASH.

■ ■ ■ ■

**DEAR ABBY:** When I married, my mother-in-law gifted me with my husband’s baby teeth and first curl of hair. It sounds weird, but it gave me a warm, fuzzy kick to receive them. It also was a bonding moment with my “new mom.”

KERRY IN WICHITA FALLS, TEXAS

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Write Dear Abby at [www.DearAbby.com](http://www.DearAbby.com) or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

What teens need to know about sex, drugs, AIDS and getting along with peers and parents is in “What Every Teen Should Know.” Send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for \$7 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby, Teen Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

## SHOWBIZ TIDBITS

### TNT: Funeral coming for J.R. Ewing on new ‘Dallas’

**NEW YORK (AP)**—J.R. Ewing will get a send-off with a proper funeral on “Dallas.” TNT begins the second season of its “Dallas” revival next month. The network said Tuesday that it will hold a funeral for Larry Hagman’s memorable character at some point in the 15-episode season but that it hasn’t been filmed or

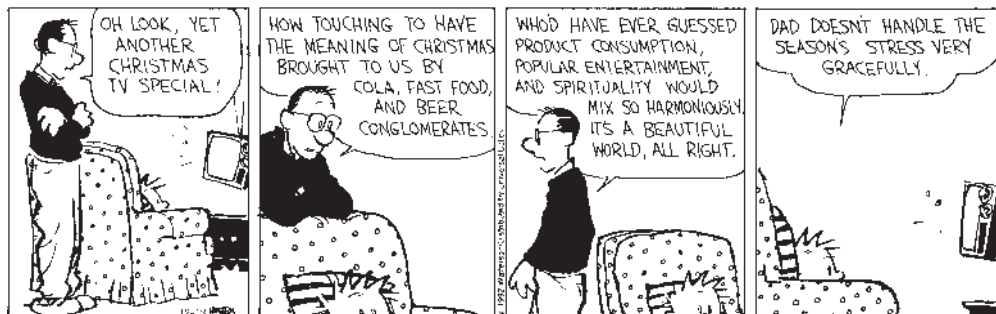
scheduled yet. Hagman died at age 81 over the Thanksgiving weekend. TNT spokeswoman Erin Felentzer says the network isn’t saying how Ewing will be killed off in the series. Hagman kept working until soon before his death due to complications of cancer, and will appear in several of the new season’s episodes. Hagman’s character is a television icon dating back to the “Who Shot J.R.?” episodes in the 1980s.



# Pastimes

## Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson



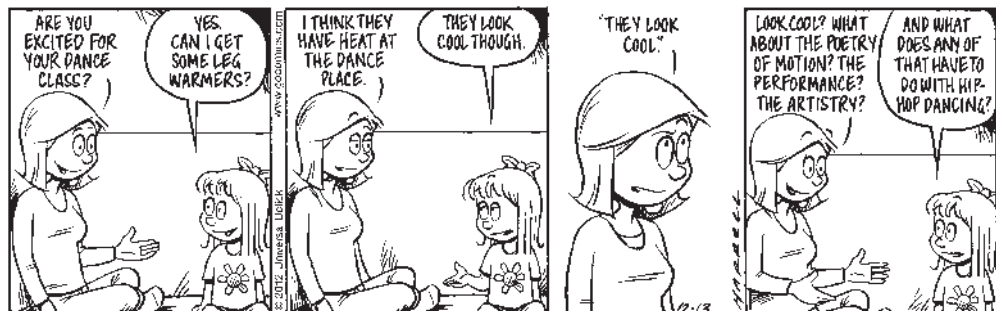
## Garfield®

By Jim Davis



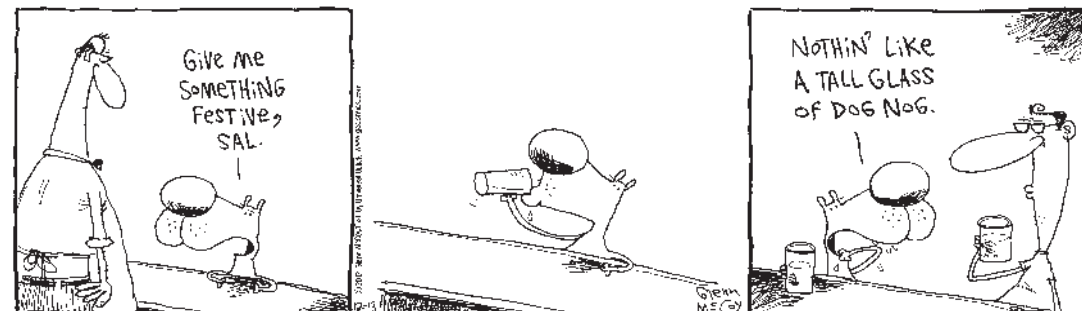
## Adam@home

By Bryan Basset



## The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy



## CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

**ACROSS**

1 Bean curd

5 Scot's chapeau

8 Read bar codes

12 Portent

13 Gorilla

14 Exam

15 Body powder

16 Coffee holder

17 Egyptian cross

18 Catch in a snare

20 Norway's capital

22 Outrageous

26 "— Foolish Things"

29 Call-day link

30 Carte lead-in

31 Enervates

32 Hollywood trickery, for short

33 Whirl

34 Muhammad or Laila

**DOWN**

35 Reaction to fire-works

36 California-Nevada lake

37 How low can you go?

40 One

41 "Night-hawks" painter

45 Graceful young woman

47 Altar affirmative

49 Volcanic outflow

50 Coral

51 A billion years

52 Tied

53 Otherwise

54 Droop

55 Leftovers

**DOWN**

1 Carry

2 Mideast nation

3 Touched

4 Straight-on, as one's legs

5 Hosiery shade

6 Spring

7 "Amahl and the Night Visitors" composer

8 Trite

9 Tomb of a sort

10 Inquire

11 To the — degree

19 Rd.

21 — Na Na

23 Correct

24 Hodge-podge

25 Glass sheet

26 Autocrat

27 Head light?

28 Gourmets

32 Lice, slangily

33 Needle-point creation

35 Japanese sash

36 As well

38 Piece of cutlery

39 Sandal type

42 Macadamize

43 Arden and Plumb

44 Carry on

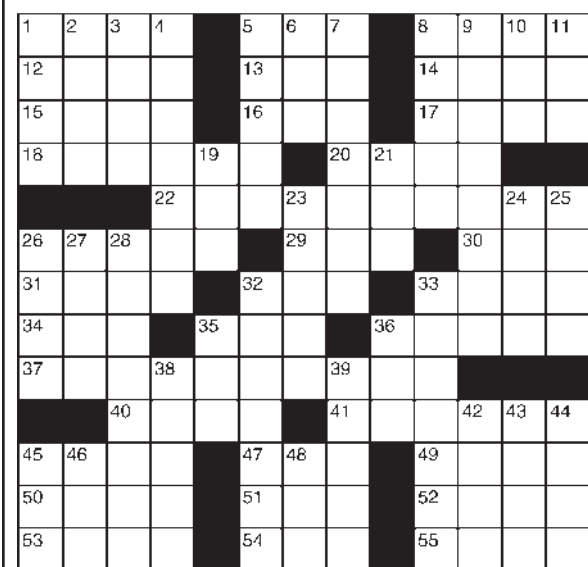
45 Opposite of "post"

46 Wet wriggler

48 1950 "who murdered me?" movie

**Solution time: 25 mins.**

**Yesterday's answer 12-13**



## STUMPED?

For answers to today's crossword, call 1-900-226-5955! 99c per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

**CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY:** Taylor Swift, 23; Jamie Foxx, 45; Steve Buscemi, 55; Wendie Malick, 62.

**Happy Birthday:** You'll have a tendency to overreact and overdo. Budget wisely and limit the promises you make. Scheduling your time wisely will make a difference to your advancement. Strive to be reliable, responsible and to boost your reputation. Home improvements or property investments will benefit you financially. Your numbers are 3, 10, 18, 26, 32, 37, 40.

**ARIES (March 21-April 19):** Plan a get-together with old friends or take a moment to re-evaluate your strategy for the upcoming year. This is a great day to talk about your plans or share what you have to offer with people in influential or knowledgeable positions. ★★★★★

**TAURUS (April 20-May 20):** Your partnerships must be looked at carefully. Size up who has done what and make an effort to equalize your position one way or another. Taking a creative idea and turning it into a useful solution will bring you applause and maneuverability. ★★★

**GEMINI (May 21-June 20):** Respond graciously. Love and compassion will help you avoid discord. Not everyone will agree with your choices, and some may be dishonest to avoid involvement, but at the end of the day, you are the one who has to live with your decisions. ★★★

**CANCER (June 21-July 22):** Look at your past and present before you decide on future prospects. You must ensure that you will be victorious before you tell everyone your

plans. Love is in the stars, and discussing your feelings and commitment will change your life. ★★★

**LEO (July 23-Aug. 22):** Don't allow anyone to weigh you down with responsibilities that don't belong to you. Put your priorities in order and make sure everyone knows your schedule. It's important that you mingle with people who can contribute to a brighter future. ★★★

**VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22):** Shopping, socializing and sharing with friends will be a pick-me-up as long as you don't take on too much or overspend in the process. Set your budget and you will ensure that everything you do will be accessible and affordable. ★★★★★

**LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22):** Listen to what elders in your family and workplace have to say. You will find out valuable information that will help and encourage you to make the right choice personally and professionally. Don't get angry when what's needed is making a difference. ★★★

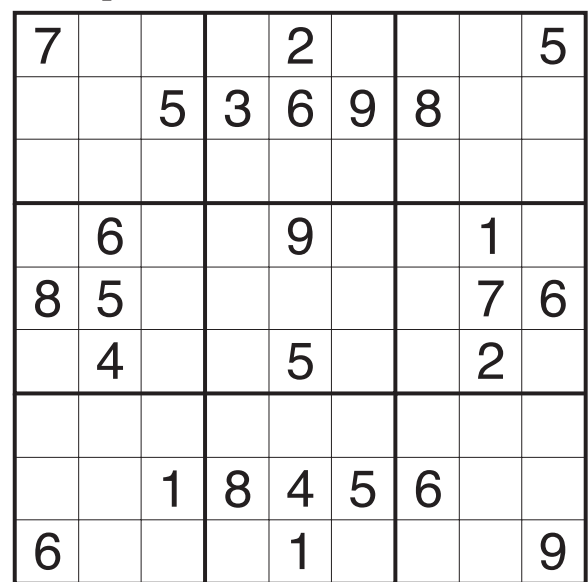
**SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21):** Don't question your desires—make them happen. Shying away from something you've wanted to do for a long time will leave you depressed. Follow through with your ideas and broaden your spectrum. It's up to you to do what's required to advance. ★★★

**SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21):** Your enthusiasm will motivate others to pitch in and help. Focus on what you can do for those in need and you will boost your image and attract hefty support. Getting together with someone from your past will lead to deception. ★★★

## SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku

By Dave Green



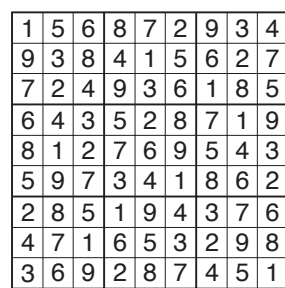
Difficulty Level ★★★

12/13

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Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's SUDOKU Answer



Difficulty Level ★★★

12/12

## EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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**CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19):** Uncertainty will kick in, causing you self-doubt and the possibility of making a costly mistake. Rethink your plans. You will see that compromise is required in order to make things work personally and professionally. ★★★



**AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18):** Listen carefully and respond slowly. Ask questions and look at what's being offered and the type of results you can expect to get. Keep your festivities simple and thrifty. Someone showing interest may not have good intentions. ★★★



**PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20):** Focus on travel, love and learning about different lifestyles and traditions. Don't be too quick to judge others or to concur with a decision you feel iffy about. Promises must be kept, so don't commit to anything that will be hard to honor. ★★

**Birthday Baby:** You are curious, adventuresome and playful. You are strong-willed and challenging.

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## WONDERWORD

By DAVID OUELLET

**HOW TO PLAY:** All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally, even backward. Find them and CIRCLE THEIR LETTERS ONLY. DO NOT CIRCLE THE WORD. The leftover letters spell the Wonderword.

LOTTERY BINGO GAMES

Solution: 6 letters



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12/13

Across, Ages, Bingo, Birthday, Bonus, Cash, Claim, Coin, Contest, Corners, Date, Enjoyment, Entertainment, Entire, Excitement, Free, Game, Gift, Inspect, Instant, Jackpot, Layout, Letters, Line, Lottery, Lucky, Match, Numbers, Play, Post, Rewards, Rows, Save, Scratch, Sing, Spaces, Square, Style, Sweepstakes, Symbols, Tickets, Vendor, Winning

Yesterday's Answer: Appetizer

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# Saints' suspensions tossed out in bounty case



**NEW ORLEANS**  
(AP)—Finding fault with nearly everyone tied to the New Orleans Saints'

bounty case, from the coaches to Roger Goodell, former NFL Commissioner Paul Tagliabue tossed out the suspensions of four players Tuesday and condemned the team for obstructing the investigation.

In a surprising rejection of his successor's overreaching punishments, Tagliabue wrote that he would "now vacate all discipline to be imposed upon" two current Saints, linebacker Jonathan Vilma and defensive end Will Smith, and two players no longer with the club, Browns linebacker Scott Fujita and free-agent defensive lineman Anthony Hargrove.

Tagliabue essentially absolved Fujita, but did agree with Goodell's finding that the other three players "engaged in conduct detrimental to the integrity of, and public confidence in, the game of professional football."

It was a ruling that allowed both sides to claim victory more than nine months after the league first made "Saints bounties" a household phrase: The NFL pointed to the determination that Goodell's facts were right; the NFL Players Association issued a statement noting that Tagliabue said "previously issued discipline was inappropriate."

Vilma, suspended by Goodell for the entire current season, and Smith, suspended four games, have been playing for the Saints while their appeals were pending. Fujita is on injured reserve; Hargrove is not with a team.

Tagliabue, appointed by Goodell to oversee a second round of player appeals, criticized the Saints as an organization that fostered bad behavior and tried to impede the investigation into what the NFL said was a performance pool designed to knock targeted opponents out of games from 2009 to 2011, with thousands of dollars in payouts.

A "culture" that promoted tough talk and cash incentives for hits to injure opponents—one key example was Vilma's offer of \$10,000 to any teammate who knocked Brett Favre out of the NFC championship game at the end of the 2009 season—existed in New Orleans, according to Tagliabue, who also wrote that "Saints' coaches and managers led a deliberate, unprecedented and effective effort to obstruct the NFL's investigation."

The former commissioner did not entirely exonerate the players, however.

He said Vilma and Smith participated in a performance pool that rewarded key plays—including hard tackles—while Hargrove, following coaches' orders, helped to cover up the program when interviewed by NFL investigators in 2010.



In this Nov. 30, 2012, file photo, New Orleans Saints football defensive end Will Smith, left, and linebacker Jonathan Vilma arrive at an attorney's office in Washington, for a hearing on their appeals of bounties suspensions.

"My affirmation of Commissioner Goodell's findings could certainly justify the issuance of fines," the ruling said. "However, this entire case has been contaminated by the coaches and others in the Saints' organization."

Tagliabue said he decided, in this particular case, that it was in the best interest of all parties involved to eliminate player punishment because of the enduring acrimony it has caused between the league and the NFL Players Association. He added that he hoped doing so would allow the NFL and union to move forward collaboratively to the more important matters of enhancing player safety.

"To be clear: this case should not be considered a precedent for whether similar behavior in the future merits player suspensions or fines," his ruling said.

Tagliabue oversaw the second round of player appeals to the league in connection with the cash-for-hits program run by former defensive coordinator Gregg Williams from 2009-2011. The players initially opposed his appointment.

Goodell had given Vilma a full-season suspension, while he gave Smith, Fujita and Hargrove shorter suspensions.

Tagliabue cleared Fujita of conduct detrimental to the league.

The former commissioner found Goodell's actions historically disproportionate to past punishment to players for similar behavior, which had generally been reserved to fines, not suspensions. He also stated that it was very difficult to determine whether the pledges players made were genuine, or simply a motivational ploy, particularly

because Saints defenders never demonstrated a pattern of dirty play on the field.

"The relationship of the discipline for the off-field 'talk' and actual on-field conduct must be carefully calibrated and reasonably apportioned. This is a standard grounded in common sense and fairness," Tagliabue wrote in his 22-page opinion. "If one were to punish certain off-field talk in locker rooms, meeting rooms, hotel rooms or elsewhere without applying a rigorous standard that separated real threats or 'bounties' from rhetoric and exaggeration, it would open a field of inquiry that would lead nowhere."

Saints quarterback Drew Brees commented on Twitter: "Congratulations to our players for having the suspensions vacated. Unfortunately, there are some things that can never be taken back."

The Saints opened the season 0-4 and are now 5-8 and virtually out of the playoffs after appearing the postseason the three previous seasons, including the franchise's only Super Bowl title to conclude the 2009 season.

Shortly before the regular season, the initial suspensions were thrown out by an appeals panel created by the NFL's collective bargaining agreement. Goodell then reissued them, with some changes, and now those have been dismissed.

Now, with the player suspensions overturned, the end could be near for a nearly 10-month dispute over how the NFL handled an investigation that covered three seasons and gathered about 50,000 pages of documents.

"We respect Mr. Tagliabue's decision, which underscores the

due process afforded players in NFL disciplinary matters," the league said in a statement.

"The decisions have made clear that the Saints operated a bounty program in violation of league rules for three years, that the program endangered player safety, and that the commissioner has the authority under the (NFL's collective bargaining agreement) to impose discipline for those actions as conduct detrimental to the league. Strong action was taken in this matter to protect player safety and ensure that bounties would be eliminated from football."

The players have challenged the NFL's handling of the entire process in federal court, but U.S. District Judge Ginger Berrigan had been waiting for the latest round of appeals to play out before deciding whether to get involved. The judge issued an order Tuesday giving the NFL-PA and Vilma until Wednesday to notify the court if they found Tagliabue's ruling acceptable.

Vilma also has filed a defamation lawsuit against Goodell, which also is being handled by Berrigan. Vilma's lawyers, Peter Ginsberg and Duke Williams, said by email to The Associated Press that they would "pursue the defamation action vigorously."

NFL investigators found that Vilma and Smith were ring-leaders of a cash-for-hits program that rewarded injurious tackles labeled as "cart-offs" and "knockouts." Witnesses including Williams also said Vilma made a \$10,000 pledge for anyone who knocked then-Minnesota quarterback Brett Favre out of the 2010 NFC title game. However, Tagliabue found it was not clear if the

pledge was genuine or simply a motivational prop.

"There is more than enough evidence to support Commissioner Goodell's findings that Mr. Vilma offered such a bounty" on Favre, Tagliabue wrote. "I cannot, however, uphold a multi-game suspension where there is no evidence that a player's speech prior to a game was actually a factor causing misconduct on the playing field and that such misconduct was severe enough in itself to warrant a player suspension or a very substantial fine."

The NFL also concluded that Hargrove lied to NFL investigators to help cover up the program. The players have from the beginning denied they ever took the field intending to injure opponents, while Hargrove has said he never lied about a bounty program, because there wasn't one.

Goodell suspended Williams indefinitely, while banning Saints head coach Sean Payton for a full season.

Tagliabue's ruling comes after a new round of hearings that for the first time allowed Vilma's attorneys and the NFL-PA, which represents the other three players, to cross-examine key NFL witnesses. Those witnesses included Williams and former Saints assistant Mike Cerullo, who was fired after the 2009 season and whose email to the league, accusing the Saints of being "a dirty organization," jump-started the probe.

"We believe that when a fair due process takes place, a fair outcome is the result," the players' union said in a statement. "We are pleased that Paul Tagliabue, as the appointed hearings officer, agreed with the

## Steelers suspend RB Rashard Mendenhall

**PITTSBURGH**(AP)—When Pittsburgh Steelers coach Mike Tomlin demoted running back Rashard Mendenhall to third-string following a fumble in a loss to Cleveland last month, Tomlin stressed Mendenhall would have a chance to redeem himself.

Not this week.

The Steelers suspended the mercurial Mendenhall for their game Sunday at Dallas for conduct detrimental to the team. Pittsburgh promoted running back Baron Batch from the practice squad to take Mendenhall's place.

The suspension is the latest in a series of setbacks for the 25-year-old Mendenhall. He emerged as Pittsburgh's starter in 2009 and topped 1,000 yards in 2009 and 2010. He nearly reached the milestone again last winter but tore the ACL in his right knee in the regular-season finale against Cleveland.

Mendenhall returned Oct. 4 and had 101 total yards and a touchdown in a victory over the Philadelphia Eagles. He strained his right Achilles four days later against Tennessee and never regained a firm grip on the starting job.

NFL Players Association that previously issued discipline was inappropriate in the matter of the alleged New Orleans Saints bounty program.

"Vacating all discipline affirms the players' unwavering position that all allegations the League made about their alleged 'intent-to-injure' were utterly and completely false."

Smith said he was pleased that Tagliabue vacated his suspension.

"I continue to maintain that I did not participate in a pay-to-injure program or facilitate any such program," he added. "I appreciate that Mr. Tagliabue did not rush to judgment, taking into consideration all facts presented to him, before ruling—something that was clearly not done by Commissioner Goodell in previous hearings."

A statement released by Vilma's lawyers on his behalf said the linebacker is "relieved and gratified that Jonathan no longer needs to worry about facing an unjustified suspension."

"On the other hand, Commissioner Tagliabue's rationalization of Commissioner Goodell's actions does nothing to rectify the harm done by the baseless allegations lodged against Jonathan. Jonathan has a right and every intention to pursue proving what really occurred and we look forward to returning to a public forum where the true facts can see the light of day."



# Anthony scores 45, Knicks rally to beat Nets



**NEW YORK (AP)**—Now, this Knicks-Nets rivalry is really on.

If it hadn't started when the Nets left New Jersey and set up shop in the Knicks' city, it surely arrived when Jason Kidd delivered the tiebreaking 3-pointer Tuesday night, making himself an enemy of his former franchise.

"I hate him," Nets guard Deron Williams said.

Williams was kidding, the point guards are friends. But Nets fans who watched Kidd ask out of the organization and Carmelo Anthony refuse to come could easily work up more dislike of the Knicks after watching those two Tuesday.

Anthony scored a season-high 45 points, Kidd made the tiebreaking shot with 24 seconds left, and the Knicks rallied from an early 17-point hole to beat Brooklyn 100-97.

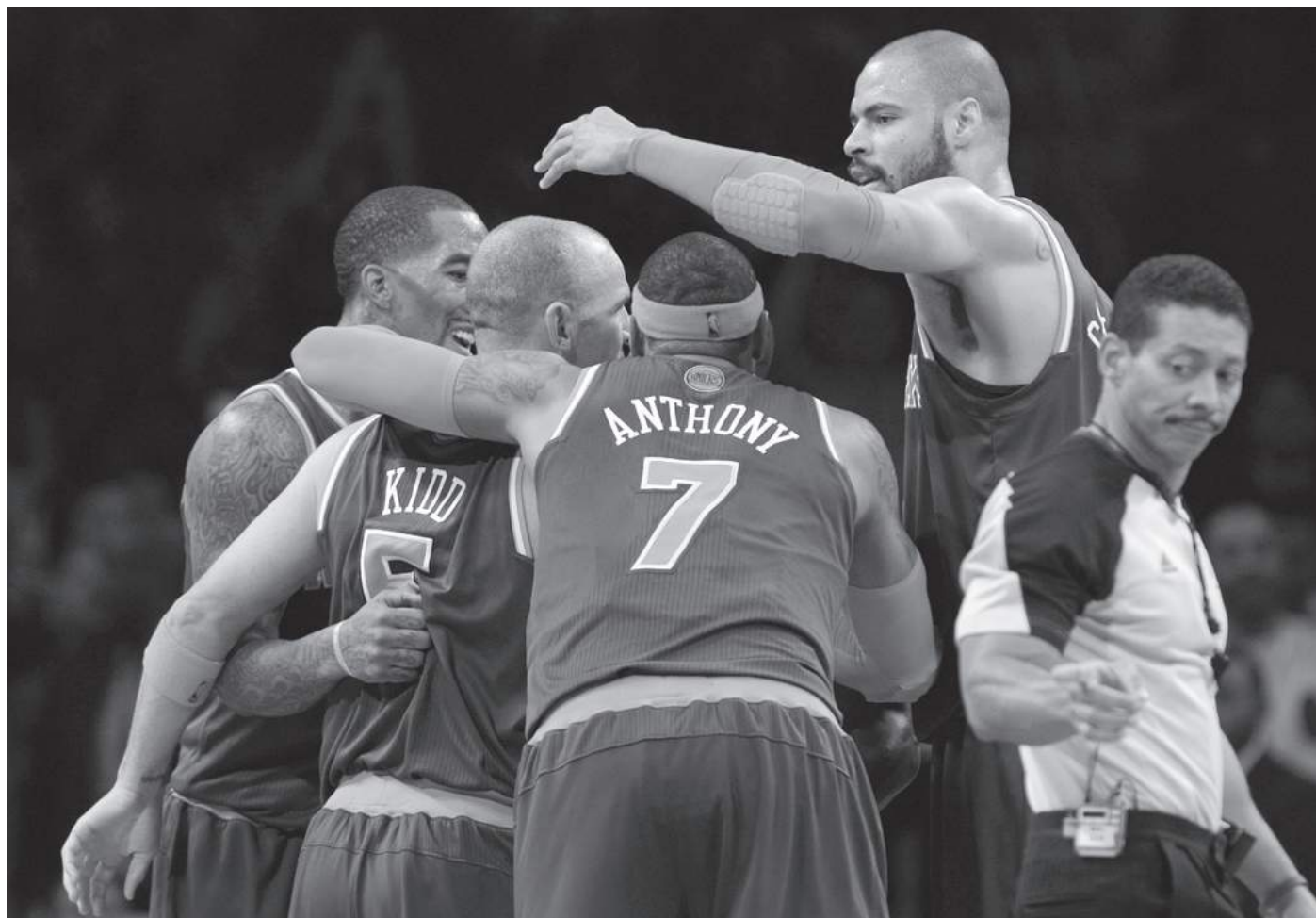
Kidd finished with 18 points against his former team, who used to dominate the Knicks when he played in New Jersey. He pumped his fist afterward in what he said was as much emotion as he shows, though denied taking any special pleasure in beating the Nets.

"I'm a competitor. I want to win," he said.

Now the series is tied at 1-1 since the Nets moved to Brooklyn, both games coming down to the tense final minutes.

"It is (a rivalry). I mean, after that first game, we might as well accept that," Anthony said. "It is what it is. They're on our division, we see them four times a year. It is a rivalry. It's great for New York to have that in Brooklyn and in Manhattan. When we come here it's a battle. When they come there, it's going to be a battle. We expect that."

Andray Blatche scored 23



New York Knicks' J.R. Smith, left, Carmelo Anthony (7), and Tyson Chandler, right, celebrate with Jason Kidd (5) after Kidd hit a 3-pointer to lift the Knicks to a 100-97 victory over the Brooklyn Nets in their NBA basketball game at Barclays Center, Tuesday, Dec. 11, 2012, in New York.

points in place of Brook Lopez, who missed his sixth straight game with a sprained right foot. Williams added 18 points and 10 assists, and Reggie Evans grabbed 18 rebounds, but the Nets lost their fifth straight.

Gerald Wallace scored 17 points, but both he and Williams missed potential tying 3-pointers on the last possession after Kidd broke a 97-all tie with his 3-pointer from the left side while being fouled by Jerry Stackhouse.

Kidd missed the free throw in an otherwise terrific effort for the 39-year-old point guard who helped carry the Knicks while fellow point guard Raymond Felton was struggling through a 3-for-12

night. Kidd had six rebounds and six assists, playing 38 minutes.

There were wild swings in momentum and crowd support in the second half, once the Knicks had gotten themselves untracked after the Nets threatened to run them off the floor in the first quarter.

The crowd was loud and energetic, the players and fans eventually matching the playoff-like intensity from the first meeting, a 96-89 Nets victory in overtime here on Nov. 26. That had left both teams tied atop the Atlantic Division at 9-4, but the Knicks have since gone 7-1 to surge to the top of the Eastern Conference, while Brooklyn has gone 2-5.

## Cavaliers 100, Lakers 94

In Cleveland, Kyrie Irving scored 28 points in his return after missing 11 games with a broken finger, helping Cleveland drop the Lakers to a new low in a tumultuous season.

Irving added 11 assists in 39 minutes as the Cavs ended a five-game losing streak.

Kobe Bryant scored 42 points and Dwight Howard had 19 points and 20 rebounds, but it wasn't enough to stop the Lakers from losing for the eighth time in 11 games and to a Cleveland team that came in with just four wins.

C.J. Miles scored 28 in his first start this season for the Cavs.

Los Angeles was without Pau Gasol, who missed his fifth straight game with knee tendinitis.

## Clippers 94, Bulls 89

In Chicago, Blake Griffin had 22 points and 10 rebounds to help the Clippers beat Chicago for their seventh straight victory—the team's longest winning streak in two decades.

Marco Belinelli hit a 3-pointer with less than a minute left to cut Chicago's deficit to 89-87, but Chris Paul answered with a floater in the lane, then iced it with three free throws down the stretch as Los Angeles snapped the Bulls' season-high three-

game winning streak.

Paul finished with 18 points and four assists as the Clippers swept the season series for the first time since 2009-10.

Carlos Boozer had 24 points and 13 rebounds for the Bulls, who had won five of six overall.

## Nuggets 101, Pistons 94

In Auburn Hills, Mich., Ty Lawson had 26 points, seven assists and five rebounds, and Corey Brewer added 15 points to Denver over Detroit.

Andre Iguodala had 12 points and eight rebounds for the Nuggets, who rallied from a slow start in which they trailed by as many as 17 in the first quarter. JaVale McGee also scored 12 for Denver.

Brandon Knight had 20 points and five assists for the Pistons. Jason Maxiell added 18 points, six blocks and six rebounds, and Rodney Stuckey scored 17.

Danilo Gallinari hit a 3-pointer with 1:48 left to give the Nuggets a 96-89 lead before Lawson's driving layup with 1:15 remaining pushed it to 98-89.

## Wizards 77, Hornets 70

In New Orleans, Jordan Crawford scored 26 points to help Washington spoil the return of overall No. 1 pick Anthony Davis with a win over New Orleans.

Bradley Beal added 15 points for the Wizards, who trailed by as many as 13 and never led until the fourth quarter. Washington won for the first time on the road after losing its first eight.

Ryan Anderson led New Orleans with 17 points. Davis, who missed 11 games with a stress reaction in his left ankle, had 13 points and seven rebounds.

The game befitted the team with the worst record in the Eastern Conference (Washington) and the team with the worst in the West (New Orleans) as both teams shot under 33 percent for the game.



**CLEVELAND (AP)**—

Shin-Soo Choo didn't want to be part of the Indians' future. So they're moving on without him.

Cleveland traded the talented outfielder to the Cincinnati Reds and acquired prized pitching prospect Trevor Bauer from the Arizona Diamondbacks on Tuesday night in a three-team deal involving nine players.

The Indians obtained center fielder Drew Stubbs from Cincinnati and received Bauer, the No. 3 pick in the 2011 draft, along with right-handers Matt Albers and Bryan Shaw from the Diamondbacks.

"This is a trade that can impact our team not only for 2013, but for the future," Indians general manager Chris Antonetti said. "Three of the players we acquired we will have under control for at least the next three seasons."

Cleveland shipped Choo, infielder Jason Donald and about \$3.5 million to the Reds, while sending left-handed reliever

# Choo to Reds, Bauer to Indians in 3-team trade

Tony Sipp and first baseman Lars Anderson to Arizona.

The Diamondbacks also received shortstop prospect Didi Gregorius from Cincinnati.

Choo, primarily a right fielder for Cleveland since he was acquired from Seattle in 2006, will play center and bat leadoff for Cincinnati.

"It was very difficult giving up home-grown talent, but we think Choo can fill the missing parts in our lineup both offensively and defensively," Reds general manager Walt Jocketty said in a statement. "He is an exciting player, and we expect him to set the table."

Dealing Choo was almost a necessity for the Indians. He was entering the final year of his contract and is eligible for free agency in 2013. The Indians have not been able to work out a deal with agent Scott Boras, who has turned down several extensions in recent years.

The 30-year-old Choo, from

South Korea, batted .283 with 16 homers and 67 RBIs in 155 games last season. He had been considered a core player for the Indians, who collapsed in August and finished 68-94 - two games out of last place in the AL Central.

"It was really tough," Antonetti said of trading Choo. "I talked with Shin-Soo tonight and expressed my profound appreciation for his professionalism. He is always one of the first to arrive for workouts, whether it is spring training or just a game."

With plenty of power in the middle of the lineup, Cincinnati has lacked a prototypical leadoff man to get on base consistently in front of sluggers such as Joey Votto, Jay Bruce, Ryan Ludwick and Todd Frazier. Brandon Phillips, who previously batted cleanup at times, was pressed into leadoff duty last season despite a .322 career on-base percentage.

Choo can also hit the ball out of the ballpark, but his .381 ca-

reer OBP fits the bill at the top of the order. He also had 43 doubles and 21 steals this year.

The speedy Stubbs has played center exclusively for the Reds, helping them win NL Central titles in 2010 and 2012. He batted .213 with 14 homers and 40 RBIs last season, striking out 166 times in 493 at-bats. He has 100 stolen bases over the past three years, including 30 in 2012.

Antonetti said the team hasn't decided where Stubbs will play. Michael Brantley played center for the Indians last season, but has also spent some time in left.

"In Drew Stubbs, we received a great defensive player who brings an element of speed and power to our lineup," Antonetti said. "We are happy with the job Michael Brantley did for us in center field, but Drew is one of the best out there. He brings a great deal of athleticism to our team."

Bauer, one of baseball's top pitching prospects, became the first member of the 2011 draft

class to reach the majors and went 1-2 with a 6.06 ERA in four starts for Arizona this year. The 21-year-old right-hander struggled with his control, compiling 13 walks and 17 strikeouts in 16 1-3 innings.

Bauer spent most of the season in the minors, going a combined 12-2 with a 2.42 ERA in 22 starts at Double-A Mobile and Triple-A Reno. He had 157 strikeouts and 61 walks while allowing 107 hits in 130 1-3 innings.

"We are getting a young pitcher with a ton of potential," Antonetti said. "He can be a top-of-the-rotation guy with development. He is somebody we have been interested in for a long time, since he was at UCLA."

Arizona general manager Kevin Towers said he was sorry to part with Bauer, but "we're fortunate to have a lot of pitching depth."

The 22-year-old Gregorius, considered a defensive whiz,

spent last season with Double-A Pensacola and Triple-A Louisville before appearing in eight games for the Reds. He hit a combined .265 with seven homers and 54 RBIs in 129 minor league games, adding 21 doubles and 11 triples while scoring 70 runs.

The Diamondbacks have been looking for a shortstop to replace Stephen Drew, traded to Oakland in August after returning from a serious ankle injury. They were thought to be interested in Indians All-Star Asdrubal Cabrera, though Towers wouldn't comment on that.

Towers said Gregorius reminds him "of a young Derek Jeter." Gregorius will go to spring camp and compete for the starting job in the big leagues.

Arizona completed a \$15.5 million, two-year contract with right-hander Brandon McCarthy on Tuesday and also acquired reliever Heath Bell from Miami earlier this offseason. Towers said those additions make it "highly unlikely" the team will trade slugger Justin Upton.



# Pacquiao ‘won’t beg’ Marquez for rematch

By ROY LUARCA  
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER



**H O L L Y - W O O D**—Despite his harrowing knockout defeat Saturday night, Manny Pacquiao won’t be chasing after and begging Juan Manuel Marquez for an immediate rematch.

Instead, Pacquiao will be waiting for a reasonable offer, according to his adviser Michael Koncz.

“There’s no rush to decide on anything,” Koncz told Manila-based sportswriters Monday (Tuesday in Manila). “If they come to us with a reasonable offer, we can always entertain Marquez—as long as Marquez’s team doesn’t get a swollen head just because he knocked us out.”

Koncz said everyone should consider the totality of the bout, not the one-punch knockout.

“I don’t think that losing is



Filipino boxer and Congressman Manny Pacquiao waves to the crowd upon arrival in Manila, Philippines Wednesday Dec. 12, 2012 with his wife, Jinkee following his 6th round knockout loss to Mexican Juan Manuel Marquez in Las Vegas, Nevada.

a key ingredient,” he said. “It’s how you lost. We were winning every round of the fight. So if they come back to us now and

say ‘We knocked you out, so we deserve the lion’s share,’ another fight will never happen again.” And Pacquiao will be able to

live with that.

He still holds a 2-1-1 (win-loss-draw) edge over Marquez in their first four fights. The first one ended in a draw despite three first-round knockdowns scored by Pacquiao.

Counting his third-round knockdown of Marquez in the second fight and his fifth-round knockdown in the fourth encounter, Pacquiao has floored Marquez five times.

What he failed to do in the first 36 rounds, Marquez finally accomplished in the 39th round of their ring saga. Pacquiao responded with a knockdown of his own, broke Marquez’s nose and was firing away when he got careless and ran smack into that devastating right with only a second left in the sixth round.

“We were dominating the fight but we give Marquez credit, he got Manny with a good punch,” said Koncz.

The ideal situation, according to Koncz, is for the Marquez camp to be magnanimous.

## 5th fight biggest ever, says Arum

By ROY LUARCA  
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

**HOLLYWOOD**—The fifth fight between Manny Pacquiao and Juan Manuel Marquez is in the works. And it’s going to be colossal—boxing’s biggest ever.

Promoter Bob Arum said the quintology would be so huge it could eclipse the dream Pacquiao-Floyd Mayweather Jr. showdown.

That is why Arum wants to make sure that everything is done right for a fifth Pacquiao-Marquez bout to happen.

Arum told The Times’ Lance Pugmire that a return fight on April 20 is no longer feasible.

This is so, he said, because the injuries sustained by both Pacquiao and Marquez in their brutal encounter Saturday night needed time to heal and it would need considerable time to promote a fight of such magnitude.

Though the original timetable was for Pacquiao to fight again on April 20, Arum said

this has been shelved due to the shocking knockout loss he suffered against Marquez at MGM Grand Garden Arena in Las Vegas.

Arum, who turned 81 during Pacquiao-Marquez 4, said he is considering the worldwide attention given to Saturday’s stunning outcome.

“No. 5 is now the biggest fight in boxing, bigger than Pacquiao-Mayweather,” Arum said. “The idea we’d be ready to fight April 20 is ludicrous.”

Arum declined, however, to give an exact date for the next Pacquiao-Marquez fight.

He said he expects to keep Pacquiao-Marquez in the United States, with Las Vegas again the first-choice venue.

Though his star fighter Pacquiao lost, Arum was elated by early reports that Pacquiao-Marquez 4 surpassed expectations. If the numbers are right on the dot, the fourth edition will eclipse the 1.25 million buys generated by the third tiff.

## HERAS

From Page 28

Vanuatu’s Emma Maucotel. The championship match was scheduled at 3:45pm yesterday (12:45pm Saipan time) at the Waikato Tennis Centre and results were unavailable at press time.

The doubles finale was Lee’s second championship game appearance in the Waikato tourna-

ment, as she also made it to the finale of the girls U12 singles before eventually losing to Coffin yesterday morning, 1-6, 2-6. Before falling to Coffin, the 11-year-old Lee recorded a shutout win in the opening round and stunned three seeded foes to advance to the finals.

Heras also blanked his first round foe, No. 8 Hannah Yee and went on to win two more games, including one over Weekley (the tournament top

seed) to make it to the semis. Coffin ended Heras’ run and foiled an all-CNMI battle for the Waikato girls U12 tiara, which Thea Minor took home in 2007.

After falling short in their singles championship bid, Heras and Lee, who are members of the Pacific Oceania Touring Team, earned another chance to bring home a first place medal as they were unbeaten in the first three games

in the girls U12 doubles.

The Commonwealth bets started their doubles crown bid with a 6-0, 6-0 spanking of Kelly Benish and Cassidy Hughes last Sunday. Heras and Lee were then paired against the second-ranked pair of Phoebe Adler and Courtney Huff and won anew, 6-3, 6-4, to march into the semis against another seeded team.

Lee and Heras’ lopsided victory was a big contrast to Coffin and Maucotel’s win, as the Fiji-

Vanuatu tandem had to slip past Lea Bollo and Nikita Bouttler in three sets, 0-6, 6-3, 10-7, to make it to the finals last Tuesday.

Meanwhile, Lee and Heras also played in the girls U14 singles and dueled in the semifinals of the consolation draw. Lee defeated Lucinda Smith, 6-0, 6-0, Jessica Lessa, 6-0, 6-0, and Samantha Oliver, 9-2, to barge into the semis. Heras prevailed over Anais Siapele, 9-7, Claudia Kerr Smith, 9-8, and Am-

ber Barry, 9-2, to set up a semis match over Lee, who eventually won, 9-0. Lee then bowed to the fifth seed Ruby Lawler in the finals, 5-9.

Meanwhile, Luther Lizama also competed in the consolation draw of the boys U12 singles and topped two matches to move into the quarterfinals. Lizama beat Mateo Rouass, 6-2, 6-0, and No. 16-ranked Caleb Fleming, 6-2, 6-2, before losing to ninth seed Trent Young, 3-6, 3-6.

## CNMI

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qualifiers will gain slots to the 2014 AFC Challenge Cup, which will be held from March 8 to 23, 2014 in Maldives. The champion of the Challenge Cup will then qualify for the

2015 AFC Asian Cup where the zone’s top-ranked Japan, North and South Korea, and Australia have already earned spots.

The qualifier in Nepal will be the CNMI Men’s National Team’s debut in AFC and the Blue Ayuyus are leaving no stone unturned as far as its preparation for the prestigious com-

petition is concerned.

“This is a huge opportunity for the NMIFA and our Men’s National. Everyone is looking forward to the opportunity to play at the international level and hope to bring back a positive result,” said NMIFA technical director Johann Noetzel in an earlier email to *Saipan Tribune* before he attended the qualification draw last Tuesday.

Noetzel, who is also the Blue Ayuyus’ goalie, said they have been training since September to prepare for the qualifier, have played several exhibition matches, and are scheduled to battle a couple of Japanese teams early next year.

“We played one match versus Guam, which fielded its best team. We fielded the youngest team we have ever had. Guam won the game,” added Noetzel, who is teaming up with several U18 players.

The team has a pool of more than 20 players and 18 will make the final cut, which will be announced either at the end of January or mid-February. The Blue Ayuyus are also looking to beef up their roster with three to eight off-island players.

When asked to gauge the Blue Ayuyus’ readiness for the qualifier, Noetzel said they way

past the halfway mark.

“At this time we are at about a six out of 10 in preparation. But we are on track with our schedule and will intensify training in January and February. The team needs to improve the speed of play and first touch. Organization of the team looks good. The players understanding of their individual roles is improving,” Noetzel added.

Meanwhile, the Blue Ayuyus will play an exhibition match against a select team that has former Philippine National Team member Rudy Del Rosario as guest player

## OVER

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finish line before the 6pm cut-off time and they ran along the course in style with some wearing Santa hats, bells, wig, and toy reindeer antlers. Some ran with their babies in strollers and others brought along their dogs, like 90-year-old Mina Neidrauer, while kids negotiated the course in their scooters.

Robert Torres, president of

the organizing Saipan Swim Club thanked the participants during the race briefing and also acknowledged the sponsor of the fun run: PIC, Bridge Capital, DFS, IT&E, National Office Supply, Marianas Resort, Ride NMI, McDonald’s, Coca Cola Beverage Company, PDI, Salty’s, and Joshua Berger Law Office.

### Masters swim meet

Meanwhile, SSC will host the masters open swim meet this Sat-

urday at the Kan Pacific Swimming Pool in Marpi.

The meet will begin at 8:30am with eight events lined up in the weekend competition: 50m and 100m butterfly, 50m and 100m backstroke, 50m and 100m freestyle, and 50m and 100m breaststroke.

Two special races will also take place at the Marpi pool tomorrow. The first one is the 50m freestyle for younger kids and their parents.

“The child and parent swim

together and both have to touch the wall to finish. No dives allowed. Anything goes. The child can ride on the back of the parent all the way or in the deep water and then beside the parent when close to the wall. Water wings or life jackets are allowed and encouraged,” according to SSC’s press release.

For the 100m freestyle relay (for older kids), the parent will swim the first 50m and tags his/her child who is standing at the pool and will complete the race.

during the season.

First place is awarded 15 points, in addition to a bid into the two-day Ace of Aces Championship, while 14 points goes to second and so on down through the Top 10 place finishers; the remaining participants each get a point. Its season traditionally starts in May and ends in April.

For more information, contact Terry Guerrero at 285-8374, Bennet Seman at 483-0126, Yuko Togawa at 287-9856, or Delores Yamagishi at 483-3195.

## KIM

From Page 28

Ae (39), and she blew past her rivals with an impressive 37 on the venture in. Wang was also tied with dual ace winner, Lorraine Babauta (92 gross and 81 net), at the midpoint, but the latter faded out of contention late in the round.

Right behind the two front-runners came another newbie, Cai Yinnu, who made her CWGA debut back in August.

Remarkably, Yinnu actually held the edge over Kim halfway through the round with her gross sum of 43, but faltered in the clutch and scribbled in a 48 on the backside for a 91 raw count that worked into a 73 net total, good for 13 points.

Behind the podium finishers came Me Ae (74 net), Togawa (77), and Kimiko Abe (77); they earned 12, 11, and 10 points, respectively.

Kim joins May Ace Wang, June’s Togawa, July’s Sherlyn Jones, August’s Me Ae, Sep-

tember and October’s Babauta, and November’s Yuko Togawa.

This coming January’s Ace tourney is scheduled for Saturday, Jan. 12; again at Laolao’s west course. Show time is set for noon leading into a 12:30pm tee off.

Established in 2007, the CWGA is a non-profit organization founded to promote, encourage and introduce women to the sport of golf in the CNMI. The CWGA utilizes a standard net score format, where a predetermined point system is tallied

### TRIBUNE SPORTS SCORES

#### NBA STANDINGS

##### EASTERN CONFERENCE

Atlantic Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
New York	16	5	.762	—
Philadelphia	12	9	.571	4
Brooklyn	11	9	.550	4½
Boston	11	9	.550	4½
Toronto	4	18	.182	12½

##### Southeast Division

Miami	14	5	.737	—
Atlanta	12	6	.667	1½
Orlando	8	12	.400	6½
Charlotte	7	13	.350	7½
Washington	3	15	.167	10½

##### Central Division

Chicago	11	9	.550	—
Milwaukee	10	9	.526	½
Indiana	10	11	.476	1½
Detroit	7	17	.292	6
Cleveland	5	17	.227	7

##### WESTERN CONFERENCE

Southwest Division				
San Antonio	18	4	.818	—
Memphis	14	4	.778	2
Dallas	11	10	.524	6½
Houston	9	11	.450	8
New Orleans	5	15	.250	12

Northwest Division				
Oklahoma City	17	4	.810	—
Utah	12	10	.545	5½
Denver	11	11	.500	6½
Minnesota	9	9	.500	6½
Portland	9	12	.429	8

Pacific Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
L.A. Clippers	15	6	.714	—
Golden State	14	7	.667	1
L.A. Lakers	9	13	.409	6½
Sacramento	7	13	.350	7½
Phoenix	7	15	.318	8½

BY THE ASSOCIATED PRESS



## BY WALTER CEPEDA SUTHERLAND



Far right, Team A's Wilfredo Francisco, of Hi-5, lofts an open jump shot from the right elbow over Team B's Mike Espinosa, of Rollers 2, in the U16 all-star game.



Left, Team A's Madeline Alegre, of the CNMI Jr. National Girls squad, takes advantage of a mismatch by posting up Team B's Sam Darag, of Rollers 2, in the U16 all-star game.



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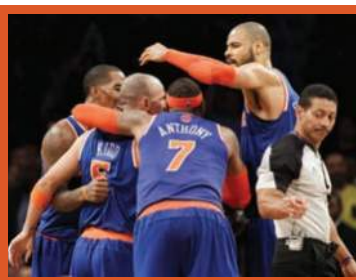
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SAIPAN TRIBUNE

## Heras, Lee crush semis opponents



ROSELYN B. MONROYO

Isabel Heras, seen here returning a shot in a local tournament in February this year, teamed up with Carol Lee and advanced in the girls U12 doubles finals of the 2012 Waikato Christmas Junior Open in Hamilton, New Zealand.

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO  
roselyn\_monroyo@saipantribune.com  
REPORTER

**C**arol Lee and Isabel Heras continued their impressive showing in the 2012 Waikato Christmas Junior Open in Hamilton, New Zealand.



The CNMI pair shut out the third-seeded duo of Jordan Berry and Sarah-Kate Weekley in the girls U12 doubles semifinals, 6-0, 6-0, to clinch the second finals berth and arrange a title duel against Fiji's Ruby Coffin and **See HERAS on Page 26**

## CNMI strikers off to Nepal for AFC qualifier

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO  
roselyn\_monroyo@saipantribune.com  
REPORTER



The CNMI National Men's Team will be traveling to Nepal next year to compete in the AFC Challenge Cup 2014 Qualifiers.

In the qualification draw held last Tuesday at the Asian Football Confederation headquarters in Kuala Lum-

pur, Malaysia, the CNMI is placed in Group D with the host, Palestine, and Bangladesh and is the only unranked team in the field. Palestine is the highest ranked team in the group at No. 22 (Asian ranking) and No. 148 in the world, while Nepal is at No. 32 and No. 169 and Bangladesh is at No. 33 and No. 171, according to the FIFA rankings updated on Nov. 7.

Four other groups will have their respective qualifiers with Myanmar hosting Guam, India, and Chinese-

Taipei in Group A, Group B's Tajikistan, Pakistan, and Macau going to Kyrgyzstan, Group C's Afghanistan, Sri Lanka, and Mongolia playing in Laos, and the Philippines welcoming Turkmenistan, Cambodia and Brunei. Groups A, C, D, and E qualifiers will be played on March 2, 4, and 6, while Group B's tournament is set for March 17, 19, and 21.

The winner of each group and the two second best-placed teams in the **See CNMI on Page 26**



ROSELYN B. MONROYO

Participants in yesterday's 2012 SSC Jingle Bell Fun Run head out to the course.

## Over 100 join SSC Jingle Bell Fun Run

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO  
roselyn\_monroyo@saipantribune.com  
REPORTER



More than 100 runners participated in yesterday's 2012 Jingle Bell Fun Run with veteran Steve Pixley leading the finishers of the late afternoon race.

Pixley completed the 4.5-kilometer race, which started and ended at the Minatchom Atdao pavilion across the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium with the turn-around point at the World War II Tank along the Quartermaster Road, in a time of 19:40.

Rino Takahashi and Leo Takahashi

came in at second and third place overall, after clocking in at 19:45 and 19:48, respectively. Allen Stafford came in at fourth with his 20:58 and joined the Takahashi siblings in the Top 3 in the male student division.

Sharing the student top honors with Rino Takahashi was female student No. 1 finisher Conatsu Kaga, who submitted 21:56.

Joining Kaga, Rino Talahashi, and Pixley in the winner's circle was Pipit Survaningsin, who made it to the finish line at the 22:41 mark, just over a minute ahead of Robyn Wondrasek (23:58).

Majority of the runners reached the **See OVER on Page 26**

## Kim triumphs in CWGA December Ace

By WALTER CEPEDA SUTHERLAND  
walter\_sutherland@saipantribune.com  
REPORTER



Newcomer Gil Ah Kim has already made a name for herself among the CNMI Women's Golfers Association regulars by squeaking out a victory over a field of 20 participants in last Saturday's December Ace of the Month Tournament at the Laolao Bay Golf Resort's west course.

It did not take the new member very long at all to get acclimated to the scene as she bagged the win on just her fourth try since joining the group this past September.

Kim started out with a raw 46 and slightly improved her tally on the back side with a 44 for an even gross count of 90 that adjusted into a field-low net

total of 71.

Kim was almost run down by May Ace Xiao Ling Wang, but caught some luck complements of a generous handicap adjustment that swayed in her favor by one stroke.

In addition to the thrill of breaking the ice with her very first win, Kim also secured a berth into the association's Ace of Aces Championship Tournament slated for April 2013. She also tabbed 15 points to her season total.

Notably, though she already earned passage into the season-ending event it was still a tough break for Wang who put together a very solid, field-low, stroke play round of 78. She earned 14 points toward the season standings.

At the turn Wang's raw 41 trailed only fifth place finisher Noriko Togawa (38 gross) and fourth place's Jeong Me **See KIM on Page 26**



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Members and coaching staff of the CNMI Men's National Team pose for a group photo before an exhibition game against Guam at the Leo Palace Resort in Yona last month.